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BOOK REVIEW

by

James D. MacArthur

of

GETTING TO KNOW THE REAL YOU

By Sterling G. and Richard G. Ellsworth

Deseret Book, 1981

Brother Sterling Ellsworth presented the pre-convention workshop for AMCAP members in Oct, 1979. It was our intention to publish a summary of that workshop. However, since this book was soon to be published, it was decided to publish this review instead.

—Ed

The major effort of this book review is to summarize Sterling Ellsworth's major viewpoints as expressed in the book. Therefore, the content of the review contains none of the personal perspectives of the reviewer other than those which match Dr. Ellsworth's directly.

"Getting to know the *real* you, remembering who you *really* are and keeping your *first* estate, are phrases with a great deal in common according to Dr. Ellsworth, the author of this new work on true and accurate self-perception in a gospel framework.

There are more dimensions to our being than are apparent to us with our presently available physical senses. We come as volunteers, eager to succeed, eager to experience, eager to learn what earth life has to teach us. And although our memory of our pre-earth life is taken from us that we may act and be acted upon, fairly, without restriction, yet our *identity* as powerful, successful and ethereally beautiful spirit sons and daughters of divine parents is not changed at all. This identity always remains. It is ours, and it is always there, always available, whether we are aware of it or not. It is the "real me", the "deep down inside soul" that so many people are struggling to uncover and to know. It is the "real self". It is the sacred individual essence that is particularly our own anywhere and everywhere no matter who or what we are in our mortality. It is the foundation upon which our lives here upon earth were meant to be built.

The main issue in accurate self-perception lies in our understanding of the key word "identity". There is a permanent identity available to all of us that lies in our ability to clearly understand our divine, eternal relationship with God. We must obtain and maintain a clear view of our most basic identity. That is the key.

However, some people are almost completely immersed in the things of this earth. They cannot or will not go beyond what is perceivable by their physical

sense. They are caught in this world's dimensions and whatever else one might suppose is unreal, nonexistent.

The following is a description of how the trappings of this world begin to affect our self-perception

Gradually a young child becomes aware of the dimension of time. Time relationships begin to have meaning. He begins to measure and arrange events that happen to him in terms of sequences, of before and after. He adopts, necessarily and conveniently, the world's measurement scale of minutes, hours, days, and years. He becomes terribly conscious of the changes that occur in his body as he grows older, and he is indoctrinated with the values the world places on these changes. Perhaps he begins to serve these changes, seeking to obtain some and to avoid others. He may begin to worship youth, or power, or socially prescribed beauty; he may seek to shape himself to some prescribed mold, exercising and padding his body, decorating and emphasizing its parts. As he comes of age, the world's dimensions of space and time may become his major dimensions and, at last, may become the only dimensions by which he measures the values of his existence.

But our spirit did not come here from a sphere so distinctly limited. It is not bound nor influenced by age and other similar limiting concepts. It came into this mortal world with the intention of keeping its first estate. This means maintaining its spiritual achievement, remaining true to its original self and "nourishing and increasing its spiritual inheritance of sensitivity, awareness, empathy, understanding and love through its mortal experience."

Basic to Satan's plan is that we should accept a counterfeit identity, a "world" self, in place of our real spirit self, and that we should measure our worth in worldly ways such as physical appearance, approval of a group, social achievement, etc. Soon, we will begin to believe that these things *are* ourselves, our real selves.

He whispers in our ears, "you go out and buy yourself some new clothes, and get some plastic hair - then you'll feel like a million bucks!" Or, "You get yourself on the pom-pom team,

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or get to be a cheerleader, or get the lead in a play, or lead your company in sales, or get to be president of the board, or a leader of the people, and *then* you'll be somebody." But he never tells us that our need for worth and purpose is spiritual, that it is a continuing need from our first estate, and that these outward things that he promotes are of the earth and external to our spirits, and that therefore they can never really satisfy.

How vital it is then to have a true and accurate perception of what we really are! We begin to see the importance to our mental health to know our real selves and to see the proper place of internal and external values. In healthy people, performances and appearances are outward reflections of the inner self. External things should be a manifestation of the beauty and nobility within. The spirit is King.

Integrity, love, tenderness, assertiveness, consideration, privacy, modesty, chastity are beautiful and dependable because they flow outward from the spirit. In such a dimension, self-respect is sure.

However, in this mortal dimension, body is King. A person can buy fake, counterfeit worth by having his body fit a certain mold or by doing certain things with his body. Age, race, color, size, shape, sex, achievement all have become conditions of inner worth.

But worth, joy, happiness, purpose, and meaning are all internal things! In their highest development, they are spiritual. Appropriately providing for them is the literal job of the inside, real self. And the inside self is capable. It is able to do this if allowed. Worth is built into the spirit in the pre-mortal world. We did not come to mortality to get it. We brought it with us. Worth does not have to be earned all over again here on earth.

Man has worth simply because he is a child of God, a human being, a shining spirit self with a marvelous body and a right to grow and become. Worth is programmed into man before he is born, and, as the self grows in mortality (if it is allowed to grow), man becomes even more confidently and sensitively aware of that fact.

But suppose we are unaware of our true nature or that we ignore it. Suppose it is muffled and stifled and covered over with lies and inaccurate information? Suppose it is not given the nourishment it needs? Then it cannot do its job. It cannot provide for the person's spiritual needs. Externals will then appear to take over the job of giving evidence of worth in the individual. Body and performance become the "main agents of supply for what the stifled spirit is no longer allowed to provide."

First things must be placed first, and second things second. The spirit is first. It must rule. The body, and all the external things it is able to do, is second. It must obey the spirit! External things, such as appearance and performance, should flow from the spirit, from the inside self. They should be inseparable results of the first-estate identity of each individual.

Let us then catch a glimpse of the individual who has been able to remain relatively unaffected by the false self-identity that is so much a part of this world.

But, there are also those in the world who have not covered themselves over, who are more positive than negative, who have had adequate positive nurture from their first appearance upon the earth, who have very thin layers of worldly padding and very small loads of garbage, and only narrow defensive barriers that cover only small pain. These people are sensitive; they sparkle and shine. They have great power and great beauty. Their beautiful selves shine through their thin world layers as the bright sun shines through wispy layers of earth's morning clouds. When such a person comes near, we feel we have known him before--and we feel safe with him; we are able to love him without guile as we loved each other in our first estate before we left our Father's house and took on mortality and the test of this earth life.

Such people are congruent. They have learned how to keep external things in harmony with internal reality. In their lives, the inside self is in control of the outside world. In other words, such a person is keeping or maintaining his first estate in the midst of his experience in his second estate. In him, both estates are being brought together in a mutually contributive relationship that brings honor and glory inevitably to the spirit accomplishing it.

And the spirit can accomplish it. It is able. The spirit, the inside self that is in every man and woman born to this earth, has wonderful qualities. It is lovable and capable. It is interesting; it is exciting; it is thrilling. It has great magnetic power; it is attractive and powerful. It is intelligent, precious, sensitively aware. It is genuine and exceedingly beautiful.

It is apparent then that understanding how the inner self is nourished and strengthened is critical. In the pre-mortal world we were powerfully strengthened by the unconditional love of God. Genuine love is "the first law of heaven, it is the basis for all successful living." Love nourishes the powerful spirit being that is our real self, our real identity, and that dwells within our earthly bodies.

This type of essential nourishment is not easily obtained in this world, however. To the extent that spiritual nourishment is lacking, mutation occurs. In our desperate attempts to be what we actually are, we feel forced to change ourselves into something that we are not so that we do not perish.

In Oregon a few years ago, we had a rhododendron in our yard that didn't grow as it should have done because we had not cut away a big enough opening in the layer of black plastic. The rhododendron plant had been prevented by the plastic from receiving the sunlight and fresh air and other nourishment its roots needed to fulfill their potential. I remember scraping away the thick layers of bark mulch, laying bare the black plastic, and then pulling back that heavy layer from the earth. Beneath it, all across the surface of the earth, was a solid white mat of long runners, of long, groping, stem-like roots. Besides rhododendron roots, there were roots from many other seeds that had tried to grow. I recognized some of them by the ways in which they had sent out their shoots. Here an iris bulb sent out long pale fingers, and here a blackberry vine. Each seed had obediently begun to grow regardless of the heavy barriers above it. Each tiny plant had worked tirelessly to actualize its potential, but the thick layer of black plastic, covered with many inches of heavy damp bark mulch, had proved too formidable.

The plants could get little water and little air. They were prevented from receiving the nourishment they needed, and so each plant had searched for an opening, for a way out, for a

way to live regardless--and, in the process, had changed. Instead of a blackberry bush with leaves, thorns, and juicy fruit, that seed had produced a great mass of pale thin roots and stems groping for nourishment to satisfy the driving need to stay alive. Each plant had been forced to mutate, or die.

Our greatest need is to understand how we are relating to ourselves and to others. Are we remembering that our every interaction is a support to what we really are or a support to a mutated world self? When we desire to communicate to another our feelings of positive regard, our love targets take the form of externals (3.8 GPA, ability to cook, lofty career position, financial status, physicalness, etc.) or internals (she is kind, gentle, reliable, utterly honest, inward beauty, comfortable to be with, etc.). It is surprising when we consider how many of our love targets are external.

The man who came into my office threatening to divorce his wife because she weighed 247 pounds was openly proclaiming that his love targets in his relationship with his wife were purely physical. He openly stated, "That is not the body that I contracted for." In this marriage he related primarily to his wife's flesh and what that could do for him. He had married a body, not a person. He had no sensitivity to nor even awareness of her spiritual identity, her heavenly being, her real self. This was mutation. And she, perhaps as a consequence, had turned to food as a love substitute for the real nourishment she so vitally needed. This too was mutation. Both of them had become blind to what originally was intended to be.

All of our relationships with others and with ourselves are exchanges in which nourishment is given and taken. These relationships should constantly be evaluated in terms of targets (what we are aiming for) and motivations (our values, why we seek what we seek). Both target and motivation are equally important.)

Conditional love supplies are delivered by one person to another upon certain conditions. They have nothing to do with the intrinsic worth of the inside self. The receiver feels a need to constantly be proving, earning or buying his conditional love supplies. Few will give them to him free because they know little of his innate worth. A purchased love supply is "always external and always conditional for it is delivered upon payment of price." We work to earn that which we feel we innately merit, but few will give us. Sadly, the "worth" gained, the "love" obtained, not only mutates the user, but also reinforces the false target that is causing the mutation.

Each person, as a person, merits "love and respect, confidence, trust, freedom, faith, purpose, and worth, simply because he is. These are his by right of his identity. True love matches the identity of the inside soul of both giver and receiver."

To the extent that we become mutated, (in that real needs are left unmet) a "substitute self" is created. This is a learned, counterfeit of the real inside self. Styles of behavior associated with the substitute self are unauthentic; they pervert perspectives, victimizing and enslaving the real self, mutating and changing it until it cannot fulfill its original capabilities. For

example, overeating or being overweight is a common style often adopted by a substitute self. This style is pressed into service to fill substitute needs, needs that have taken the place of the original great requirement for nourishment to the inside soul.

Leaving behind the trappings of the substitute self involves great and effective effort. To achieve the desired change, we must understand the root causes of the maladaptive behavior and not simply focus on the symptoms of the core cause.

Down below the surface lurks a problem, a real hurt. The person will seldom openly say: "I feel inadequate." "I don't like myself." "I'm afraid of other people." "I use sex for closeness I don't really have." "I get angry because anger keeps people away from me." These realities, though true, are simply too shocking to be admitted even to oneself, and they are much too revealing to be openly proclaimed. Yet, many suffering persons sense them about themselves, and long with all their hearts to change them.

But to really change such outward appearances, we must get to their inward causes. Treating only symptoms is placing a Band-Aid over a cancer.

There are a few key questions that one might ask himself in order to discover his substitute-self styles, their purposes and origins and yields. These questions must be asked over and over again, and the answers sought at deeper and deeper levels, for many of them are subconscious locked deep in areas of ignored unawareness.

The first question is: What is self-concept? In other words, how do I feel about myself? How does it feel to be me?

The second question is: How do I cope within my self-concept point of view? What styles have I adopted to handle my negative self-concept in various situations?

The third question one should ask himself in order to discover his styles is historical. It requires digging into the past. It asks, "How did my self-concept get the way it is? What are the threatening hurts it defends me against?"

"Love deprivation is Satan's most powerful tool." With it, he manipulates men into positions wherein they choose to frustrate their own progress in this life, and they inhibit their eternal progress. Mental illness is a way of handling deprivation, a way of getting substitute love when one does not have an adequate real love supply. One very prominent type of substitute-self style is called psychosis.

The psychotic person handles stress by escaping. He makes a massive change in his reality, adopting a whole new dimension of things. He creates a fantasy situation that puts him grossly out of contact with what really is. He does this to escape from pain. In time, he becomes addicted to his fantasy life; his fantasy protects him from hurt, from the agony of his deprivation. His fantasy life gives him substitute love supplies in place of those genuine supplies he does not find in real life.

And the style works, somewhat adequately anyway. Extreme psychotic people tend to lose their anxiety. They will rarely have ulcers, colitis, nervousness, stuttering. Their fantasy worlds are so massively powerful, so mutating to their real selves, that anxiety is rare. But their fantasy style shuts off their sensitivities and their awareness.

Neurotic substitute styles such as crying payoff in relief from the stress of tension. Nervousness and

excitement usually bring help from others and crying does relax us and bring sleep. All of these neurotic styles are, in some way, attempts at securing love reinforcement, securing a temporary illusion of solution or an acceptable escape from a situation that is painful.

There are other forms of mental illness that need to be treated. For a description of these, refer to the text of the book.

The truly aware person needs no substitute styles, no false pay-offs, no counterfeit rewards. His joy is in his heavenly being and that knowledge of self is so deeply thrilling and quietly joyous that desires to "take, possess, or exploit" have no foundation. But, such a level of being is difficult to attain. We begin to develop substitute styles very early in our lives. By the time we are eight, we have made some clear choices of styles. Of course, these have had major environmental influence.

The first and primary factor is the availability of real love supplies in our family. If genuine love supplies are available, then the real self confidently emerges and the substitute self is not necessary.

A second factor is the order of the child's birth, both by sex and by years. A baby who closely follows another boy has less chance of successfully copying the older boy's substitute styles. But if a boy follows a girl, there is more chance for his success should he copy his sister's styles. Because sex differences easily provides uniqueness (a substitute for real identity), it is not as threatening for a boy to copy an older sister's styles, or for a girl to copy an older brother's styles, as it is for a sister to copy a sister, or a brother to copy a brother.

A third factor is the social need to be different. Being different is an external substitute for genuine internal self-assurance.

The fourth factor is the model the parents allow or prohibit in the child's environment.

Each style a child chooses will be a style that accommodates four or five urgent needs. Each will be rooted in his negative self-concept.

Understanding human interaction and its relationship to true identity is a major facet of this model of human behavior and self-perception.

In all human interactions, three types of performance can be identified. One of these is doing wrong things for wrong reasons - action motivated by identity deficiency. When one lies, shows off or belittles another, he is doing a wrong thing for a wrong reason. Showing off the physical body is a wrong thing done for a wrong reason. The wrong reason is to buy or prove worth. The payoff received is a cheap substitute for a real love supply. The substitute is better than its alternative - nothing.

Another type of interaction is doing right things for wrong reasons. This too is action motivated by identity and love deficiency. The person does a right thing but does it to fill his worth and love deficiencies.

A person who abuses his body by overeating in order to receive oral satisfaction, or some other love supply, is doing a wrong thing for a wrong reason. However, when he decides that his body is being abused, that it is ugly, that therefore he

is not attractive to other people, and he decides to cease overeating, goes on a diet, and is able to lose weight and put his body back into normal shape, he has done a right thing; he is no longer abusing his body, but he has done it for a wrong reason--that he might be attractive to other people and thereby have their approval and their love. That kind of love, based upon the acceptable shape of his body, is conditional and fake. It is a cheap substitute. He is doing a right thing for a wrong reason. His basic feelings of being insecure and inadequate and unloved probably have not changed at all.

A third type of interaction is doing right things for right reasons. This is action motivated by being. It is based on the respect for and the expression of the inside self, the heavenly being that inhabits the mortal body. This type of interaction reinforces the real spirit self as the other two deficiency motivations reinforce the substitute self. The only payoff involved in this interaction would be the deep, solid joy that inevitably comes from acting in harmony with one's true, divine identity.

There is a fine line between deficiency and sufficiency motivations, between helping another person in order to get something from him or helping him as an expression of one's own inside self. A person who gives to get is usually worried and desperate. Like the mother who attempts to hug her son to fill her own need, this person is driven by outside forces, by external measures of his purpose and worth. He generally feels deficient and inadequate. So as he chooses to do right things, they are often done for wrong reasons.

On the other hand, a person who gives to express his own being is most often doing right things for right reasons. He gives to express his own fullness. He is not worried or desperate.

In all we do, however, we express a mixture of our "selves", our real self, and our negative substitute, world self. The mixture will occur. The question to be answered is which "self" will predominate? We control this in our mind. We must learn to "catch the negative" each time it swings into action. With concentrated effort one must say to oneself, "Just a minute now; I told a lie." Why did I tell a lie? What did I expect to get from that? Is it really worth it to me to have that?" The recognition of what one is doing is the process of freeing the real self to do its job for it is the real self that speaks when those bold questions are asked.

Often, as we seek to meet real needs, we forget to include a love supply from ourselves. It rarely occurs to us that the heavenly being that dwells inside can provide us with strength and assurance. Love by its very nature is self-perpetuating. "It feeds on its own fruits; kindness, service, companionship, firmness, appreciation, regard."

Love supplies from the real self begin when we perceive in ourselves a character trait that is evidence of our spirit, such as gentleness, courage, sensitivity, persistence, or sacrifice, a quality of being not taught to us by anyone, although it may

have been reinforced over the years by real love.

We must be wary, however, in our inner searching, for outward appearances and performances can be insincere. They may not be what they appear to be. Satan is very adept at producing counterfeit forms. For instance, some people appear to be truly sacrificing, or truly gentle and kind, but their motivations may be to get recognition, praise, or love, or even money or material goods, rather than to express their being. Getting is always a deficiency motivation.

Now when people obtain a vision of even one character trait that belongs to them, to that heavenly being that is really them, they begin to grow. When they perceive that there really is something inside them that does not come from any culture or environment or from anybody else's personality, something that is evidence of their heavenly being, they begin to be free, for they own something that is utterly independent of the world and its dimensions. No one can ever steal it or take it. No one else has any power over it. No prison door can shut it away. No knowledge of it lifts them above criticism, above discouragement, above failure. It strengthens them in their self-regard. It increases their understanding. It nourishes their sensitivity. And, as the veil opens further for them, as it may do, they discover more about their real selves; inspiration becomes more easily available to them, for the things of the spirit are always discerned by the spirit.

It requires a constant effort on our part to keep our first-estate eternal identity before us so that it may influence our thoughts, feelings and actions.

All we have to do is do it, and constantly. In the morning when our loved ones come for love, we need to remember who they are; at midday, when the demands of business and profession press worldly hard on us, we need to remember who we are; in the evening, with family and friends, at table or entertainment, we need to remember what our purposes really are and why we are alive in this dimension of time and space. Everything follows this remembering - sensitivity, honesty, confidence, respect, worth, capability, lovability, empathy, and all the vast awareness of patterns and styles of needs and behaviors, authentic and substitute - all the facts of true human freedom and temporal and eternal happiness, all of these and more enter into our lives by his great key.

YOU MAY WANT TO READ:

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- Bigler, E.D., Neuropsychological Assessment and Brain Scan Results: A case study approach, *Clinical Neuropsychology*, 2:13-24, 1980.
- Bigler, E.D. & Ehfurth, J.W., Critical limitations of the Bender-Gestalt test in clinical neuropsychology: Response to Lacks, *Clinical Neuropsychology*, 2:88-90, 1980.
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- Ellsworth, Sterling G. & Richard G. Ellsworth, *Getting to Know the Real You*. Deseret Book Co., Salt Lake City, 1980.
- Shepherd, David R., Personalized Counseling and Client Satisfaction, *Conciliation Courts Review Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Dec., 1980.
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Thanks to you, Brothers Bigler, Clive, Shepherd and Taylor for responding to our request for information about your recent publications. We hope your example will motivate others to do the same.

—Ed

The Purpose of this Association shall be:

- a) To promote fellowship, foster communication, enhance personal and professional development, and promote a forum for counselors and psychotherapists whose common bond is membership in and adherence to the principles and standards of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, both in their personal lives and professional practice.
- b) To encourage members and assist them in their efforts to provide leadership in stemming the tide of materialism, amorality and immorality that threatens to engulf their various other professional organizations and the society at large.

Article 1, Section 2, AMCAP By-laws