The Pike and the Whale or The Matter of Values

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The Pike and the Whale
or
The Matter of Values
Gary Carson, Ed.D.

DEVELOPING THE PIKE SYNDROME/
MALADAPTIVE BEHAVIORS

Process

The great northern Pike, taken out of a lake in Minnesota, lay still in the aquarium where he had been placed. The water temperature had been refrigerated to about 55 degrees and other efforts had been made to enable him to acclimate to new conditions. At first shy of light, cameras and other gear present in a laboratory, he eventually seemed to settle down to a normal routine life in the tank. Minnows were introduced into the tank. Being a carnivore, the Pike made no further effort to eat the minnows.

Now a large jar was introduced into the tank. Being transparent, the presence of the jar in the tank of water was not discernable to the Pike. Minnows were then introduced into the jar - being separated from the Pike by a protective wall of glass. The Pike approached the minnows cautiously, stalking his prey. In a series of quick movements he made efforts to devour the minnows. In each instance his efforts were fruitless, and in fact painful, as he simply rammed his nose into the glass wall. Having persisted across an interval of time in his effort to attain food, each time with the same results, the Pike seemingly languished into apathy and made no further effort to eat the minnows.

Outcome

Now what happened when the jar was removed and the minnows were allowed to swim freely about the tank? The Pike was still hungry and must eat to live - yet the minnows could swim under his very nose and he made no effort to eat them. In fact, in the presence of an abundance of food, the Pike starved to death. How come? Was not his natural condition that of a carnivore? Did he not need to eat to live? Was he not hungry? Why then did he starve to death? Because he had been conditioned - he had acquired new behavior, through conditioning, that was maladaptive, that did not foster his health, that did not follow normal, natural or instinctive processes that were laid down in the genetic neural networks of all Pike. He learned, through simple associationism, that attempts to eat minnows resulted in pain. Psychologists refer to the process as avoidance learning through instrumental conditioning using aversive stimulation. In any event, adaptive behavior for the Pike - eating minnows to stay alive - was transformed into maladaptive behavior - lying transfixed, avoiding minnows - and something as rudimentary as self-preservation was removed from the animal's behavior and the Pike starved to death.

Implications

Deterioration in Cities

Obviously maladaptive behavior only exists in lower forms of animal life. Higher forms of animal life would not be subject to such conditioning - would they? Desmond Morris¹ made an interesting observation that would seem to relate to this question. He noted that it is uncomplimentary to animals to refer to cities as concrete jungles. In the jungles you see animals perpetuate normal life-sustaining behaviors. Animals in the jungle do not engage in homosexual conduct nor do they engage in violence or killing for the purpose of killing alone. Aggression expressed in the jungle is for the purpose of attaining food or protecting the territory in which other members of a given species, often females and young, reside. Behavior is calculated to promote the regeneration and maintenance of the species. Yet, when animals are brought into captivity and placed in zoos it is more likely that they will engage in deviant behaviors. Placed in unnatural circumstances, they display unnatural behaviors - some of which are maladaptive in that they will not support the perpetuation of the species. A tiger that was known to be full, that is not in a state of hunger, chewed off the leg of another cat in an adjoining cage. In work that was reported by Seligman, monkeys assaulted and urinated upon a helpless cagemate. Recognizing the deviations from natural, adaptive behavior to unnatural or maladaptive behavior that accompany the movement of animals from their natural habitats into zoos, Desmond Morris observed that our cities ought to be identified as human zoos rather than concrete jungles.

Deterioration in Personal Lives

Obviously maladaptive behavior exists in other than the lower forms of animal life. We have only to look at what is happening in the human condition to recognize that not all of our behaviors are consistent with the instinct for perpetuation of the species. On the more overt, blatant level we can see that homosexual conduct will not perpetuate the species. Yet, it would appear that we are becoming more tolerant, understanding, or supportive of those who choose the homosexual lifestyle. We recognize that taking life does not perpetuate life, yet over recent years, perhaps decades, crimes of violence, including murder have been on the increase. At more subtle levels, we know that human beings are happiest and most productive when they live constructive, adaptive lives;
yet, how many seem to engage in self-defeating, maladaptive behaviors? How many want friends and yet have developed obnoxious behavior patterns that offend people and prevent them from attaining what they most desire, love and companionship? How many create depression for themselves because they have not acquired the skills necessary to deal constructively with their anger and so try to keep it all bottled up inside, only to find that the only way they can do this is to develop apathy or depression? How many choose to worry, choose to engage in thought processes that keep them anxious and upset - and ultimately develop a full-blown psychosomatic disorder as a result? Ulcers are only one of many disorders which stem from inability to manage stress. How many become delinquent, or on a more imperceptible level, become very keen manipulators who get what they want without risk, never risking or disclosing themselves and so go through life not really known, loved, or appreciated by others? How many feel alienated, alone, empty? Are not these conditions reflective of persons having acquired maladaptive behaviors that either reduce the likelihood that the species will ultimately survive or reduce the productivity and contentment of those who live? The conclusion that man is not exempt from maladaptive behavior seems warranted. How then did man acquire his maladaptive behavior and why does it exist?

THE WHALE, TRAINERS AND PARENTS/ ADAPTIVE BUT UNNATURAL BEHAVIORS

To answer the question of how man acquires such behavior, let us cite another example of marine life. Having answered the question of how, we will then turn to the question of why. At Seaworld in San Diego there is a large assortment of entertainment involving highly trained creatures of the deep. Most notable among these creatures of the deep is a killer whale named Shamu. Among the first trained whales of this name was one that would leap vertically some seventeen feet into the air to touch its nose on a pole extended over the water. Inquiring of the trainer as to how the whale learned this trick, I was informed that it was a matter of instrumental conditioning and the process went something as follows:

Process

First the animal was restrained from eating to ensure that he would be hungry and interested in securing food. Then he was allowed to secure food contingent upon his displaying certain behaviors. Initially the whale was trained to pay attention to a certain location in the tank - the spot over which the pole with the "target" on it was suspended. Therefore mackerel were dropped into the tank at the precise time the whale approached the selected spot. After a number of revolutions around the tank, with mackerel coming in at the same location, the whale came to recognize that there was something highly significant about that spot. He therefore swam back and forth within this area without making complete revolutions around the tank. This was the first step, but not ultimately what was wanted of the whale. He was supposed to leap seventeen feet into the air, not just confine his swimming to a certain spot in his tank. So what was the next step? When it was determined the whale had a clear association between the given location and the introduction of mackerel into the tank, the mackerel was taken away. The result was that the whale became frustrated because his motivated behavior (to secure food) was blocked. Responses to frustration include:

1) aggression - trying harder  
2) withdrawal - giving up  
3) varying behavior - finding a new way

The whale was motivated to get the food and so he engaged in thrashing around and varying his responses to see if he could determine what happened to the mackerel - he knew they were supposed to be there. He had been consistently rewarded for coming to the designated spot in the tank and so he knew the rules - only to find that the rules had been changed. So, he fretted and stewed and in the process broke water, which is what was wanted, so some mackerel were dropped. Several repetitions of his breaking water at the prespecified location helped to stamp in a new association. Whereas the former connection was location in tank - leads to - mackerel the new connection is location in tank plus breaking water - leads to - mackerel.

Once again the animal was content, swimming around the designated location, breaking water and dining on mackerel. Once again the reinforcer was taken away. He was frustrated but not beaten. He swam around and broke water in an exaggerated fashion (a variation of the "try harder" or aggressive response that stems from frustration) and in so doing touched his head on the target that was suspended some 2 or 3 feet above the water. Immediately mackerel were introduced into the water, the whale ate them, and his frustration was abated. Several repetitions of these acts led to an awareness of a new sequence of behavior, contingent upon which is the introduction of the reinforcer, mackerel. That new sequence is location in tank plus breaking water - plus touching head on target - leads to - mackerel.

Through careful management the whale was trained to display the rudiments of the behavior necessary for him to leap seventeen feet in the air to get the oohs and ahhs of the crowd - and the mackerel. From this point forward it was simply a matter of raising the pole by six inch increments until the animal reached its physiological limit of performance.

Outcome

*Adaptive but Unnatural Responses in the Whale*

At this point Shamu is exhibiting adaptive, but unnatural behavior. How many killer whales, in their natural
Adaptive but Unnatural Responses in Humans

Just as Shamu’s trainer could bring about adaptive but unnatural behavior in the whale, so it is that adults in the world of mankind can bring about adaptive but unnatural behavior in the child (though with less precision and pre-prescribed goals than the trainer). Eric Berne, the author of transactional analysis, identified three ego states that are present in every person: the Parent, the Adult, and the Child. The Parent is the part of the person that gives injunctions and backs them up with threats. The injunctions and threats are not necessarily thought through in terms of whether or not they are logical, pragmatic, or fair. Rather, they are instituted simply because the Parent has internalized, without analysis, the things he/she has been taught by adults in the process of growing up. The Adult is the part of the person that results from rational analysis and thought. Ideas, feelings, and behavior that result from the Adult processing the experiences of life are generally integrated, adaptive, and growth enhancing. The Child part of the person is the felt part, in contrast to the taught and thought parts of the Parent and Adult, respectively. This is the part of the person that is responsible for spontaneity, creativity, and the natural, open, expression of feelings.

More often than not children value the love, affirmation, and affection of their parents more than they value their spontaneity, creativity, and open expression of feelings. Unfortunately many adults in the world of children seek conformity from children and reinforce children for conforming. The result is that children adapt but violate their nature in so doing. In other instances parental figures are not certain what they want from children and so are very inconsistent in the rewards and punishments they provide. They have no system of contingency management. The result is that children once again give up their natural selves, but rather than conform, because they don’t know what to conform to, they begin to rebel and act out. In both instances (that is, conformity and rebellion) the Child has adapted to survive. Because children live in a world of diversity, they will find someone who will accept, love and reward them as they are. In many cases this leads them to becoming delinquent, aggressive, and in some cases, sociopathic or psychopathic causing others, and eventually themselves, to suffer. At this point, behavior that started out as adaptive but unnatural actually becomes maladaptive. A psychopathic killer who eventually faces the firing squad can hardly be said to have acquired adaptive behavior.

Less pronounced cases, where individuals engage in self-defeating behavior, also illustrate the role of maladaptive behavior in our lives. Albert Ellis, the author of rational-emotive therapy, defines neurosis as “stupid behavior from non-stupid people.” To the extent that any of us engages in maladaptive, self-defeating behaviors, we all qualify as neurotics. The point to be made is simply this: human beings are subject to instrumental conditioning just as are other forms of life. More importantly, however, is the consideration of what guides the learning that results in maladaptive behavior. Perhaps if we have a clear understanding of what guides learning, why maladaptive behavior exists, we can preclude a lot of human misery.

Implications

The Role of Values in Determining Outcomes

Once again let us return to Seaworld and the analogy of the whale. The trainer is very effective in securing the behavior he wants from Shamu. Before the trainer ever begins he knows:

1) What is wanted

2) Why what is wanted, is wanted

3) How to proceed, with instrumental conditioning, to attain what is wanted.

The significant item at this point is #2: why what is wanted, is wanted. It is at this point that we come squarely to the issue of values. In the case of Shamu, the trainer could have had a number of values that guided the training of the whale and these might have included:

1) The demonstration of what whales can be trained to do

2) The demonstration of what trainers can train whales to do

3) The profit that can be made by demonstrating to patrons what whales can be trained to do.

In the case of training Pike, the experimenters valued:

1) Being able to demonstrate that an animal can be made to acquire maladaptive behavior that will lead to its extinction; and,

2) Being able to create a model or teaching device that would allow them to demonstrate how to overcome functional fixedness, or the kind of closed mindedness that prevents human beings
from changing and growing just as surely as the Pike was prevented from ever eating again.

The significant point is: it is values that guide learning. If America is suffering from a great number of social maladies, it is not likely that the condition exists because we don't have the technology of learning required to ensure the socialization process; rather, the condition exists because we are uncertain of our values or have no values to guide our learning.

The manifestations of maladaptive behavior in human beings referenced earlier—homosexuality, violence, homicide, psychopathy, and a host of neurotic disorders including depression—are due not to a lack of technology but rather to a lack of knowing what is wanted or valued in human beings. Once values are determined, the process of attaining what is wanted is relatively simple.

It should be said parenthetically, lest this smacks of Brave New World by Aldous Huxley or Walden II by B. F. Skinner, that if self-determination is valued, it can be one of the guidelines for learning. While self-determination is a significant value, it should be recognized that it is not the only one.

BASIC VALUES WORTH EXAMINING

Achievement

What values have guided the evolution of great cultures? What values have prompted the development of great people? David McClelland, a Harvard psychologist, has made an extensive study of man's need to achieve. According to McClelland's study, great cultures have evolved as achievement themes were present in their literature. Such themes were forerunners of accomplishment. It appears that as people read of themes illustrating the fruits of accomplishment, they are motivated to achieve. Once they have achieved, they turn to protecting their achievements and acquisitions. Security, rather than growth and achievement, then becomes valued. Comfort also becomes of supreme value. At this point they often hire scholars to teach their children. The scholars, desiring to secure or keep their posh jobs, advocate security. Subsequently, accomplishment or achievement disappears from the teachings and writings of scholars and subsequent generations are not motivated to achieve. The result is the deterioration of the people, the reduction of their accomplishment, and the decay of their culture.

If we value life more than death and growth more than decay, then McClelland has a message for us. We should value accomplishment, achievement, and the work necessary to bring about great accomplishment.

Work

Paul Harvey, speaking of pollution and problems of energy, noted that "there is one infinitely vital resource which is in very short supply." He observed that "we are running dangerously low on the fuel which made us the powerhouse of this planet - elbow grease." Continuing, he made some other observations relative to the value of work. In 1976 a Chicago headline read, "Unemployment up to 7.5%." In the same paper were 38 pages of job opportunities. There were 11 1/2 million people receiving aid to dependent children in the country that year. In the most prosperous era of our country, welfare roles and unemployment roles were increasing twice as fast as our population. Those who produce outnumber non-producers just barely (7 to 6) but the non-producers are gaining. Some people getting food stamps in 1976 had salaries of $9,000 per year, the equivalent of perhaps $10,500 to $11,000 today. This circumstance led Paul Harvey to observe that "government may satisfy needs but not greed." Unemployment, he says, has become a profession - and it pays well. Is this adaptive or maladaptive behavior? How long can productive people produce enough for themselves and the non-producers? How long will they be willing to? If or when they quit, what will happen to the country? Perhaps we have here a case of an institutionalized maladaptive behavior, one that could lead to our extinction just as surely as it did to the extinction of the Pike.

On the other hand, what happens if we restore the value of work? Paul Harvey said, "To make America work, Americans worked." He quoted others on the same theme, namely, Paul the apostle who said, "He who does not work, let him not eat;" Ayn Rand who said, "There is not light without generators;" Tolstoy who said, "Happiness is life, and life is labor;" Sophocles who pleaded, "Without labor, nothing prospers." Typically, says Paul Harvey, big fish eat little fish. Some would have us reverse that. But when the consumers consume the producers you have a bankrupt New York City: twentieth century maladaptive behavior on a grand scale.

Robert Ulrich, the former Minister of Education in Germany at the time Hitler rose to power, noted that Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's minister of propaganda, was an unemployed Ph. D. According to Ulrich, in our Bill of Rights there ought to be the right to work. It is a value to be cherished and pursued, not avoided.

Deferred Gratification

As a first cousin to work we should also value deferred gratification. Great things are not customarily created in an instant. One of the conditions responsible for much of the maladaptive behavior in individuals, which manifests itself collectively in massive social problems like crime and extensive welfare roles, is that people value immediate gratification more than great accomplishment.

Environmental Support/Love

Just as David McClelland has identified some conditions, some values, that lead to growth, so have other
psychologists studied factors or values that contribute to growth and the improvement of the human condition. Carl Rogers, the founder of client-centered therapy, and a supporter of student-centered, experiential learning, has been joined by a host of other psychologists including Traux, Carkhuff, Berenson and others in determining what these values or conditions are.

According to Rogerian tradition, the likelihood of social, psychological, and emotional growth taking place in a human being who is under threat is greatly reduced. The person is too busy defending himself. If, on the other hand, an atmosphere can be created in which people feel valued, accepted, understood, and appreciated, they will drop any defenses and will begin to explore themselves and their world more openly, more deeply. When this takes place in the company of other people who regard them for this exploration and growth, natural development occurs, maladaptive behaviors rarely occur. The natural tendency of the body is to maintain its own health. The natural tendency of the psyche is to grow toward health - to be adaptive in the most constructive sense of the word and to avoid the acquisition of maladaptive behaviors.

In summary: we have illustrated that man can be subject to the acquisition of maladaptive behaviors. We have described the process of instrumental conditioning whereby these maladaptive, or adaptive but unnatural behaviors are acquired by humans as well as other forms of animal life. We have underscored the role of values in guiding the learning process. Finally we have tried to note some basic values that contribute to growth, and prevent the acquisition of maladaptive behaviors which, as we have seen in the case of the Pike, can be disastrous. The values supportive of growth and accomplishment are work and deferred gratification. Other values that support growth, and when properly instituted and backed up by proper reinforcement in interpersonal relationships reduce the development of maladaptive behavior are: acceptance, understanding, empathy, and appreciation - in short, love. Coincidentally, these values or conditions - namely work and love - fit exactly the definition of mental health provided by Sigmund Freud: Zu lieben und zu arbeiten."16

The Family

But where does learning take place? Where should we establish the value of love, work and delayed gratification? If we wait to imbue the child with these values until he/she has entered school, we have waited too long. It is in the family that the person first encounters values. It is the family that is the basic building block of society. Unless the family survives and unless the family holds basic values and uses these values to help children to grow naturally, without the encumbrances of many maladaptive behaviors, the society and culture will ultimately fall into ruin. So among the things which we value, among the values which guide our learning, our development, and our growth as a people, we must value the family. President Theodore Roosevelt has been quoted as saying, "The first essential for a man's being a good citizen is his possession of home virtues, based on recognition of the great underlying laws of religion and morality. No piled-up wealth, no splendor of material growth, no brilliance of artistic development, will permanently avail any people unless its homelife is healthy." (italics added.)

FORCES THAT DEFEAT THE FAMILY

Conversely, we must work to defeat those things that would defeat or destroy the family. What factors work to undermine the family? Some of them are quite obvious, others are very subtle.

Among the more subtle forces that are undermining the family are those stemming from many of the counter cultural movements of the last two decades. During the hippie movement, the free speech movement, the anti-war movement, the Black movement, the Chicano movement, the American Indian movement, the women's movement, and other movements, a number of slogans appeared. These slogans represented the values that were emerging and to which the counter cultural participants were highly committed - slogans like:

"Don't trust anyone over 35."
"Do your own thing."
"Police are pigs."
"It isn't fair for anybody until it is fair for everybody."
"Black is beautiful."
"Gays have rights."
"Men are just male chauvinists."

To be sure, the counter cultural movements had a significant role in raising the consciousness of America to significant issues. It is not intended to convey that these slogans, and their implicit values, had an adverse effect on all phases of American life. Gaining liberty, respect and the right to be appreciated, rather than being persecuted for being different, are highly laudable outcomes. However, some of the movements have had a deleterious effect on families.

Undermining Parental Trust

What will happen when children grow up believing that they are not to trust anyone over 35? When they arrive at their teenage years and are most in need of a stable adult figure in their lives, their parents will probably be "over the hill" - past 35. What will the young person do if his peers say not to trust anyone over 35 and his parents are past that mark? Obviously, he or she will be in conflict, experience some frustration, and will likely respond by becoming aggressive.
withdraw, or by varying behavior - basic responses to frustration - in order to reduce tension and seek a level of comfort or homeostasis. Just as was the case with the Pike and the whale, the person will find that certain responses are reinforced. Furthermore, the young persons will not be determining their own behavior and dispensing the reinforcement to themselves: rather, they will be subject to others who are dispensing reinforcement. In the case of the adolescent, other adolescents become the prime dispensers of reinforcement. The only problem is that adolescent do not have the perspective that adults have and therefore are likely to reinforce behavior in their friends that is ultimately maladaptive.

Immediate Gratification/The Sexual Emphasis

Most young people, encouraged by their peers, operate on a pleasure principle - "if it feels good, do it" - and fail to defer gratification until a later time. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the sexual domain of life. Many young people, without a strong set of values to direct them otherwise, reach sexual maturity and begin to engage in sexual activity before they have learned what it means to love, before they have developed emotional maturity. Having followed this path for a considerable period of time and feeling that they have been valued not for themselves but only for their bodies, they become disenchanted with sex; and, because sexual activity was likely initiated with someone of the opposite sex, they become disenchanted with members of the opposite sex as well. It is at this point that they are most vulnerable. Never having experienced true love and emotional closeness, but only sex and physical closeness, such a person still needs someone to treat him or her with dignity, to affirm his or her worth, to be his or her friend, to love him or her. Having developed a great mistrust for the opposite sex, they turn to members of their own sex to form friendships and associations with some depth and emotional substance to them. Quite often they find what socially and emotionally mature adults could have told them (had they trusted anyone over 35!) - namely, that sex is best when it is imbedded in a relationship where there is some depth and emotional quality to it; in short, where one is truly loved and feels a sense of commitment from the other person. Under these circumstances, that is of having a deep emotional friendship with someone of the same sex, many young people end up in homosexual affairs. At this point they really start to wonder what is happening to them. They are often mentally and emotionally confused and wonder if they, themselves (or anyone else in the world) are really any good and can be trusted.

Poor Models for Children

What does this do to family life? At best it makes people afraid of other people - afraid to trust and afraid to make a commitment. Even when they marry it takes many years before they feel free to love completely because of having had to protect their emotions for so long. Consequently, the real emotional cement for the marriage is not there. And what do children see who grow up under these conditions? They see parents with a key quality about them, parents who are apprehensive and unsure, who approach one another rather tentatively, not being willing to give or love completely for fear they may one day be left and will have lost it all. Such children see that self-protection is more important than investing oneself in someone else. Life then is approached tentatively, never really investing oneself or giving oneself to it. And what does life give back in these circumstances? Only half a life - a life filled with shyness, reticence, doubt, a calloused mind and heart to match. Such people suffer or cause others to suffer. Such people will have families and their families will suffer with them.

Selfishness

Another value of the counter culture is enunciated in the slogan, "'Do your own thing.'" On the positive side, this has liberated many people to respect themselves as they are without having to live completely with other's standards or expectations before coming to a point of self-respect. But what does this value and practice do to families? Carried to the extreme, it means I have no commitment to you - only to myself. Nowhere is this idea better portrayed than in a quote by Fredrick (Fritz) Perls, the essence of which was, "You be you and I be I. I was not put here to meet your needs. You were not put here to meet my needs. You do your thing. I do my thing. And if by chance we find one another, it's beautiful." Fritz Perls died a lonely man. His quote, once found on many posters, is not that popular anymore.

PRESERVING THE INDIVIDUAL. THE FAMILY. AND SOCIETY

The problem with the "'do your own thing'" philosophy is that it emphasizes the individual to the point of suggesting that he/she has no responsibility to the group, be the group the family, the school, the church, the community, the state, nation or world. It is another form of the "'look out for number one, exclusively,'" orientation. Obviously, parents must look out for their child in order for him/her to survive during infancy. It is curious, then, that the individual should turn his/her back on the family later in life. Similarly, the school, church, community, etc., look out for the rights of the child as he/she grows. Our government protects the individual - even when he/she speaks out in ways that might eventually undermine the government. If the government should fall, who would ensure the individual's right to free speech? Strange, as the person becomes an adult, he/she often fails to see how his/her individual rights have been protected. The simple point is this: without the group to protect rights, the individual would have no rights. Because the family is the basic building block of society, you can eventually get society to crumble if you first cause decay amongst all the basic building blocks. Destroying the family as the basic group will eventually destroy groups at succes-
sively higher levels of responsibility until finally the governmental agencies that exist to protect the individual will no longer be there. Then where will the individual be?

Balance Between Self and Others - The Role of Service

"Do your own thing" must be offset by another value, a value clearly stated in the Talmud. "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?"

To preserve the individual, we must preserve the group. We must be as much for others as we are for ourselves - if not more so. We should develop ourselves maximally, then we are in a position to help others maximally. We should be committed to the group, the family, as much as to ourselves. By promoting the welfare of our families we are promoting our welfare and are fostering our own growth. Earlier we stated that growth must be a basic value. What we have not said, but what we now recognize, is that the full measure of growth does not come from focusing on oneself, but rather comes from serving others. After we have realized much of our personal potential, we find that our capacity is expanded by serving others. As the song says, "A song is no song till you sing it, a bell is no bell till you ring it. Love in your heart wasn't put there to stay, it's not really love till you give it away."

So a commitment to "do your own thing" is only half of a commitment to life and to the self of the person. Only when the person balances this with a commitment to others - a commitment that must be learned and practiced in the family - does the person expand to his/her full potential and become a complete person.

THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN FOSTERING VALUES*

I have tried, up to this point, to indicate how maladaptive behaviors are acquired; to point out that these behaviors are learned and that values guide the learning; I have noted the constructive outcome to be found in the values of growth, accomplishment, love, work and deferred gratification; I have tried to point out the value of maintaining the family and have made an effort to note the pernicious effects of values promoted by various counter culture movements; I have suggested that persons must learn to serve and commit themselves to others as well as to self if they are to ever become complete as persons.

May I conclude by asking the question, "Who should foster or initiate values, and what is the role of Higher Education in this regard?" One response to this question is implied in a study done in the late 60's by a student at Weber State, Richard Miller, in one of the local high schools. Having selected two exclusive groups - one of high school leaders, the other of high academic achievers - Miller tested the two groups on a conformity test. Consistent with his expectations, leaders conformed more than high academic achievers. Since the time of his study, the work of Stanley Milgram has attained much notoriety. Milgram found that people would conform to instructions to administer shock to other people to an amazingly high degree - to the point of ignoring the pleading of the subjects to stop as the mock voltage was raised to 300-400 volts and the danger to the person's life was indicated to be extreme.

Leaders vs. Achievers - Reflecting vs. Initiating

There are a number of points that can be made from these studies. Among them is the need for developing a moral maturity within the individual so that the person can stand up for the right. Another point, however, is that conformity seems to be present in leaders to a higher degree than in high academic achievers. As individuals pursuing a higher level of education and as leaders in Higher Education, are we leaders or achievers? Are we conformers, reflecting the values of counter cultural movements, or are we initiators of values that will foster and maintain healthy individuals and a healthy society? Will we contribute to massive acquisition of maladaptive behaviors, such as in the case of the Pike, or adaptive but non-normal behaviors, such as in the whale? Who will run the reinforcement schedule on us and what values will be used to guide our learning?

Years ago, in the mid 60's, I was quite vulnerable to being disarmed by a student who protested, "That's a value judgment!" as though data and science were the only basis for formulating a position in life or in the classroom. With the passing of time, and hopefully some personal growth and maturity, I now have the opinion that all inquiry, growth, and learning is preceded by some beacon of belief, some implicit or explicit set of values. Ours is the responsibility to search our values, to identify significant ones and to make them explicit. These values should then guide us in the formulation of practices that will bring persons to greater personal fulfillment and will at the same time preserve our families and our social institutions.

Someone must choose values and must guide the next generation to internalize worthwhile values and to choose new values for themselves. Someone must enunciate values. To only reflect the values of youth and counter cultural groups, or to remain neutral while negative values are being articulated, results in the same thing. The algebraic sum of a negative and a neutral is still a negative. People in Higher Education have a responsibility to offset the negative and to represent positive, constructive, well-thought-out, basic values that will preclude or limit maladaptive behavior and will foster individual and social development.

*It is recognized that the application of this article to higher education only neglects, in a sense, a large segment of the AMCAP membership. However, its message is clear and can easily be applied in other settings. --Editor.
Self-Determination, Self-Discipline and Self-Transcendence

Self-determination is a value we should have. Right alongside it should be the value of self-denial for the benefit of the family and others. Self-determination does not mean self-indulgence but rather the right to self-direction and self-development, something that can never take place without self-discipline. Only when a person is self-disciplined is he or she free to really choose a course of action. Only when self-discipline is present is it possible to be concerned for others as well as for oneself. It is commitment to something that transcends one’s own life and brings the greatest satisfaction.

In this context I sat in the library on February 2nd and looked out the north window. Snow was falling tranquilly. The ground was covered with a mantle of white. The large pine trees just outside the window were flocked with white. Those trees were planted the spring of my first year at Weber State - 1966. As I sensed their present beauty I was also struck with their potential longevity. Those trees will bring a sense of wholeness to people, a sense of unification with nature to people long after my life span is gone - and the people who planted those trees invested in something that would transcend their own lives.

On a more personal, human level, our children have given us satisfactions we could never attain for ourselves. Academic and personal accomplishments - like carrying 28 hours of credit in one quarter and attaining a G.P.A. of 4.00; like working for 3 full years, often as much as 24-26 hours on a Friday and Saturday, to save money to sustain oneself for two years in full-time Christian service - have been paralleled by unselfish giving to others. On the last Christmas our oldest son was home, his 14-year-old sister presented him with an envelope. On the outside of the envelope was a record reflecting the date and amount of money she had received for doing babysitting and housework for others. Inside the envelope was $135.00, the total amount accumulated since the preceding December. Only as a result of committing ourselves to something bigger than ourselves - like a family, like an idea, like a nation - can we come to realize the fullness of life that comes back to us for having given. And to attain it we must be free to give, self-disciplined enough to become unselfish, unselfish enough to commit to others and to things that will outlive us.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

A number of years ago a colleague who sold motorcycles, and a brother-in-law who rode one, persuaded me that I should get a trail bike. Before I learned to ride that bike on trails, the bike taught me a number of things. My tendency was to proceed cautiously, so I went slowly and watched the path in front of me very closely. Not having much moment, I didn't have much balance. It was not too difficult therefore for me to get upset. And so it was that one week the motorbike skinned my shins and wrenched my knee and had me walking tenderly. Another week my forearm and shoulder suffered the brunt of my lesson. And so it went for a number of weeks and a number of injuries until at last I determined I must have more balance. To have more balance I must have more speed, more momentum. To risk more speed I must take my eyes away from the handlebars and look further down the trail in front of me. By looking out there far enough, I had time to anticipate obstructions, to maintain my direction and my balance, and to avoid being upset. I have since concluded that life is a lot like riding a motorcycle. The person who avoids the obstacles and upsets of life (the maladaptive behavior patterns) is the person who has his/her balance. The balance is maintained by having momentum and a sense of direction. And what provides the sense of direction? Values. Values that allow us to grow, to accomplish, to work, to love, to serve, to live a full life, to commit ourselves to families and to things that transcend us. Thus giving us a wholeness, a sense of completeness in ourselves and in our life's experience.

So here we are, fish in the tank of life. What do we choose to be? The Pike? The whale? Or perhaps one of the other assorted types of fishes - maybe the kind that rides a motorcycle, with balance. It is all a matter of values.

REFERENCES

6. Ulich, Robert. Comments made to a class of graduate students at Utah State Univ. Summer 1962 (Notes of the author.)
10. Source unknown.