



LIVING VALUES

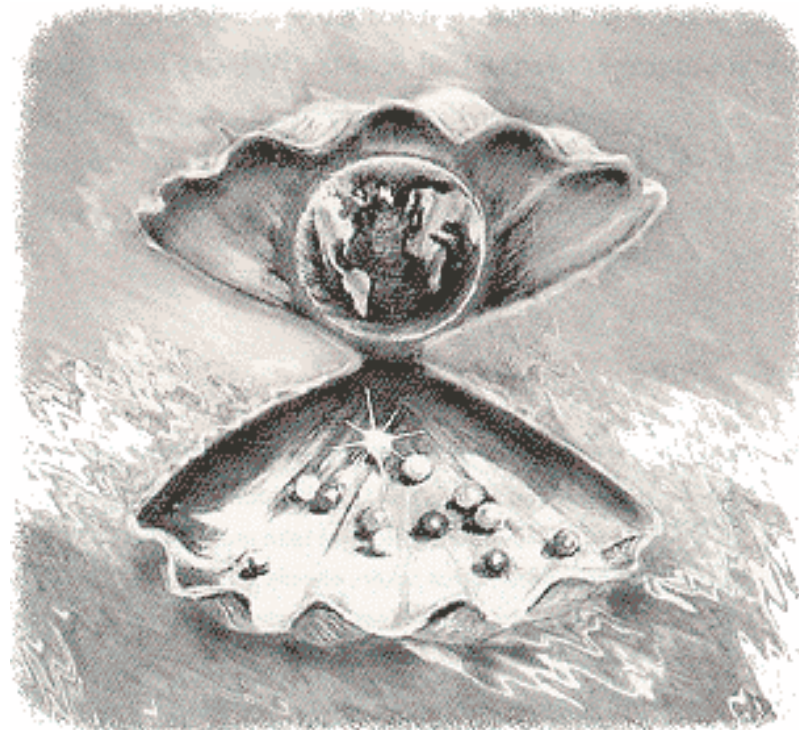
an educational program

Humility

A person who embodies humility will make the effort to listen to and accept others. The greater the acceptance of others, the more that person will be held in high esteem, and the more that person will be listened to.

One word spoken in humility has the significance of a thousand words.

Humility



Humility is found in a vast ocean of still waters which run very deep. At the bottom lies self-esteem. At first, going within the ocean is like journeying into an unknown area of immense darkness. But, just as exploration can lead to buried treasures, one searching his or her inner world can find jewels buried in the depths. And the jewel buried deepest - which shines the brightest and gives the most light - is humility. At the darkest moments, its rays penetrate. It removes fear and insecurity and opens up the self to universal truths.

Honesty is to speak that which is thought and to do that which is spoken. There are no contradictions or discrepancies in thoughts, words, or actions. Such integration provides clarity and example to others. To have one form internally and another form externally creates barriers and can cause damage, since one would neither be able to come close to anyone else, nor would others want to be close. Some think, "I am honest, but no one understands me." That is not honest. Honesty is as distinct as a flawless diamond which can never remain hidden. The worth is visible in one's actions.

Trusteeship

Humility is to accept natural principles which cannot be controlled. Everything we have - from the bodies we were born into to our most prized possessions - is inherited. It therefore becomes a moral imperative to use those assets in a worthwhile and benevolent way. The consciousness of being a trustee of such unlimited and timeless resources touches the core of the human soul and awakens it to the realization that, just as at the time of birth such resources were inherited, at the time of death they will be left behind. In death, all that will accompany the individual will be the impressions of how those resources were used, combined with the wisdom of being and living as a trustee.

The consciousness of trusteeship heightens one's self-esteem and enhances the many different relationships encountered throughout life. It draws one into a mode of silent reflection, inviting one to take time out and look at life from a different perspective. It is as if the recognition of trusteeship causes the individual to seek renewal of the relationships to the self and to the world.

Removing 'I' and 'Mine'

Humility is to let go and let be. The stone of conflict lies in the consciousness of "I" and "mine" and in possessiveness - over a role, an activity, an object, a person, even the physical body. Paradoxically, such a consciousness makes one lose that which he or she wants to hold onto - most significantly, the universal values which give worth and meaning to life. Humility eliminates possessiveness and narrow vision which create physical, intellectual, and emotional boundaries. Such limitations destroy self-esteem and build walls of arrogance and pride, which distance others. Humility gently works on the crevices to allow for breakthroughs.

When one has the virtue of humility, everyone "bows down," since everyone bows to those who themselves bow first. Thus, the sign of greatness is humility. Humility

enables the individual to become dependable, flexible, and adaptable. To the extent one becomes humble is the degree to which one becomes great in everyone's heart. A person who embodies humility will make the effort to listen to and accept others. The greater the acceptance of others, the more that person will be held in high esteem, and the more that person will be listened to. Humility automatically makes one worthy of praise.

A Call to Serve

Success in service comes from humility. The greater the humility, the greater the achievement. There cannot be world benefit without humility. Service is best done when 1) one considers the self a trustee or an instrument, and 2) one takes the first step toward accepting another who is different.

A humble person is able to function in all environments, no matter how unfamiliar or negative. There would be humility in attitude, outlook, words, and in connections and relationships. The humble person would not say, "It wasn't in my attitude, but the words just emerged." No, whatever the attitude, the outlook would be accordingly; whatever the outlook, the words would reflect that; and the three combined would assure quality interactions. The mere presence of a humble person creates an inviting, cordial, and comfortable environment. His or her words are essenceful and powerful and spoken with good manners. A humble person can defuse someone's anger with just a few words. One word spoken in humility has the significance of a thousand words.

On the high tides of human interactions, humility is the lighthouse which provides signals of what to expect in the distance. To adhere to these signals, the screen of the mind and intellect must be clean. Humility gives the power to perceive situations, to discern causes of obstacles and difficulties, and to remain silent. When one does express an opinion, it is with an open mind and with recognition of specialties, strengths, and sensitivities of the self and others.

Humility as well as the concept of trusteeship embrace our relationship with nature and oblige us not to tamper with natural laws. Nature is as life-giving as an umbilical cord. To arrogantly exploit and damage the natural habitat is to put the entire human family at peril. Humility is to inculcate natural principles in personal behavior, relationships, and other areas of human development. Without humility, we can neither build civil societies nor serve the world benevolently.

"In a dark hour of our century, during the final convulsions of the bloodiest tragedy in the history of mankind, we saw a light shining over San Francisco. When we became Members of the United Nations, we all undertook, before our consciences, to feed that flame, to maintain it and to spread the ideals it inspires."

**Mr. Amintore Fanfani,
President of the Twentieth Session of the UN General Assembly,
September, 1965**