



LIVING VALUES

an educational program

Unity

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Unity is harmony within and among individuals in the group. Unity is sustained by concentration energy and focusing thought, by accepting and appreciating the value of the rich array of participants and the unique contribution each can make, and by remaining loyal not only to one another but also to the task.

Unity is built from a shared vision, a cherished hope, an altruistic aim, or a cause for the common good. Unity gives sustenance, strength, and courage to make the impossible possible. Combining with determination and commitment, unity makes the biggest task seem easy.

The stability of unity comes from the spirit of equality and oneness, the noble values embodied in core universal principles. The greatness of unity is that everyone is respected. Unity creates the experience of cooperation, increases zeal and enthusiasm for the task, and makes the atmosphere powerful and enabling.

In Harmony

A gathering does not have unity until there is harmony within and among the individuals in the group. Just as the musician needs to practice playing the instrument alone before joining the symphony orchestra, the individual needs solitude to be in touch with his or her capacity, potential, and specialty before joining the gathering. For individual effectiveness, there needs to be clarity and cleanliness of motives and intentions. Looking inward helps harmonize thoughts, words, and actions; the individual can then adapt as necessary. Such personal integration keeps the individual "in tune."

The orchestra creates a consonance of sounds by combining the distinct rhythmic patterns of each of its instruments. In the same way, the gathering becomes sweetly harmonious when each individual adopts the power to accommodate the capacities and specialties of the others; modulates those with the self; and then combines with the orchestra. Unity is sustained by concentrating energy and focusing thought, by accepting and appreciating the value of the rich array of participants and the unique contribution each can make, and by remaining loyal not only to one another but also to the task. Such positive focus builds to a crescendo as oneness in diversity is experienced; and because unity inspires stronger personal commitment and greater collective achievement, dance as well as music can be attained!

Causes of Disunity

One note of disrespect can cause unity to be broken. Interrupting others, giving unconstructive and prolonged criticism, keeping watch over some or control over others are all strident chords which strike harshly at connections and relationships. Ego and inferiority produce disharmonious sounds. Such discord can be easily heard or quite subtle and can range from dwelling on weaknesses of others and hunger for recognition to jealousy, insecurity, and doubt. Sometimes, even in little matters, people quickly get upset, aggressive, angry, or violent; they then isolate themselves into subgroups, producing dissension and conflict. Retuning and fine tuning then become essential.

A basic human need is to feel a sense of belonging, to be part of the unified whole. People do not want to remain in isolation, oblivious to the world outside. It is also uniquely human to be curious about other people and cultures and to feel a deep sense of compassion over sufferings of and injustices done to others. It is, therefore, human

instinct to want to be together and to form natural gatherings or structured meetings which provide a common platform to talk to each other. In such ways, people get to know, understand, or help each other. This holds true for individuals as well as for nations. Consciously or unconsciously, we choose to be and act together.

Today, our curiosity is satisfied with the help of TV and the media, bringing people and cultures from around the world into our very living rooms. If that is not enough for some, travel can provide the firsthand experience! Humanity can take pride in its virtue as well as its ingenuity. Yet, with all its good, humanity is equally guilty of vice. With brothers seen as "enemies," vital energy is being misdirected, and the home of unity keeps shaking. As a result, humanity has not been able to sustain unity against the common enemies of civil war, ethnic conflict, poverty, hunger, and violation of human rights.

Inner Focus

Creating unity in the world begins with a change in individual consciousness. Such requires the human intellect to move away from conflict and confusion and - for a period of time on an ongoing basis - to concentrate in positive directions. Such inner focus does not isolate the individual, but, in fact, does the opposite: it brings that person closer to others, and in that closeness, in that shared humanity, there is the collective strength to pioneer and sustain fundamental and constructive transformation.

"To the extent that we can provide an atmosphere in which men can work together in harmony while maintaining their diversity, can build side by side and produce unified variety, can join together to produce peace while promoting the multiple characteristics that enhance the society of man, we will have met our challenge."

**Miss Angie E. Brooks,
President of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the UN General Assembly,
September, 1969**