

Submission to New Zealand Green Paper on Vulnerable Children

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Submitter

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Prelude

This submission is not scientific or religious based, but based on 59 years of living in New Zealand and connecting actively to many academic and non-academic perspectives on the matter of human psychology.

A Walk Upstream

The following 'story' was gifted to me from the Arkansas Children's Trust Fund via. Carmen Hetaraka. I acknowledge my many thanks to Carmen and the Trust.

A woman was walking along the banks of a swiftly flowing river. It was a beautiful day, and the woman was enjoying the sunshine and the impressive scenery. The woman looked out over the river, and much to her surprise, she saw a small child floating in the water. The child was splashing and thrashing about, trying to keep her head above water – the child was drowning!

The woman did what any decent person would do – she threw off her shoes and dove into the water to rescue the child. The water was very cold, and the current was swift and strong. The woman was not sure she could even make it to the child, but she did. She grabbed the child and swam safely back to shore.

Once she arrived at the shore, the woman looked back at the river and realized there were two more children floating downstream! She dove into the water again to rescue the other children. The water was even colder, and the current even stronger than it was before. It was a struggle to reach both children in time.

When she reached the shore, she looked out over the river and to see not one, not two, but 10 children floating down the river! They were all drowning! The woman called for help. A crowd of adults gathered at the shore and began to help the woman. They developed a system for retrieving and reviving the children. Some of the adults dove into the water and helped rescue the children, others stayed on the shore and comforted the rescued children.

No matter how many times they jumped into the water, more children kept floating down. There were 20, 40, a 100 of them! Some of the children were struggling, others were chillingly quiet. It was clear that most of the children were seriously injured. Some of them would be left with life-long disabilities and some of the children continued to float down the river beyond the reach of the adults. They were dying.

The adults were getting tired. The swift cold water was draining all of their strength and energy. The woman began to feel as if she could not enter the water one more time. Her fingers were numb, her arms too sore.

Suddenly the woman had a thought. She climbed out of the water and began to walk upstream. "Where are you going?" the other adults cried. "You can't leave us now. There are too many children who need to be saved."

The woman replied, "Someone or something is pushing these children into the river. We could be here for years pulling dead and injured bodies from the water. I am going to walk upstream until I find out what is causing these children to fall in!"

Her idea makes a lot of sense.

Introduction

Walking upstream means going to the *top of the cliff*, rather than operating at the bottom of the cliff where the problems are occurring and where interventions take all the focus and energy. We need to dig deeper into our cultural 'norms' - uncomfortable as that is, to find the reasons for the problems.

The Green Paper is largely focussed about how the limited number of 'ambulances' available might be arranged at the bottom of the cliff. The Paper does not look at why children might be vulnerable. Often this is quickly dismissed as too awkward to deal with, or a political issue, or blaming parents for creating vulnerable children situations.

Attempting to define vulnerable children or indeed attempting to intervene is fraught with difficulty. This is working '*on the cliff edge*'. Authorities who attempt to identify vulnerable children may be wrong and may seriously offend or traumatise a family. In reality intervention can only operate at or near the bottom of the cliff. This shows the importance of the preventative approach.

Definition of Primary Mental Health

As submitted above, and as occurs in physical health, mental health needs to be tackled from both the primary (preventative) and the secondary (interventional) positions. However the only definition of primary mental health I have found is:

Primary mental health care refers to the assessment, treatment and, when needed, the ongoing management of people with mental health and/or addiction issues in the primary care setting. It encompasses promotion, prevention, early intervention and ongoing treatment for mental health and addiction issues – from www.primarymentalhealth.org.nz

Prevention is not intervention. True primary mental health care is all about avoiding any onset of mental illness, for example, improving the environmental or socio-

cultural conditions that give rise to mental illness. Such improvements will invariably not be immediately invisible, will be incremental and with a positive aggregative effect.

It is my submission that *every* child from birth is vulnerable. Children (and adults) need to go through life with their psychological well-being intact. In today's society it is difficult for a peaceful family to maintain its peacefulness in a society where cycles of humiliation occur and peacefulness is seen as 'weak'.

Government Role

The Government may feel that they can or should only operate in the intervention area, but such a contribution will not lessen the need for intervention. Who then, should deal with prevention?

New Zealand is one of the most egalitarian countries in the world and this is reflected in the Global Peace Index <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/#/2011/scor>. Yet there is a long way to go. New Zealand is marked down in five areas, three of these are to do with crime and the increasing number of jailed persons. The issues are largely internal to New Zealand.

The interface between the demand or push for increased egalitarianism, against a historical socio-cultural legacy of a class system with race, gender, age, and disability biases manifests itself in these negative statistics.

A parallel example is the Treasury initiative on lifestyles in New Zealand <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/research-policy/tp/higherlivingstandards>.

The initiative points to non-financial aspects of our well-being in such concepts as the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI). With an advancing egalitarian culture New Zealand needs to take a lead in this area by devising and enhancing a form of GPI that will more correctly define well-being. GPI adds in factors such as the value of voluntary or non-paid work and subtracts factors such as the cost of crime. Crime imposes large economic costs on individuals and society in the form of legal fees, medical expenses, damage to property, and the like. Work on a GPI is encouraged as this will focus on both sides of the activity spectrum and measure a 'benefit/cost' index deducting the 'negative' activity from the 'productive' activity.

Appendices

Two appendices are attached and are recommended to be read at this point:

1. *Parenting Styles, and their Impact on Children: Humiliation, Abuse and Neglect*

Lindner, Evelin Gerda (2005). *Parenting Styles, and their Impact on Children: Humiliation, Abuse and Neglect*. www.humiliationstudies.org.

2. *The Ultimate Human Right: The Right to Self Actualisation*

Brian Ward, September 2011

The Cycle of Humiliation

In New Zealand society today, we see a number of symptoms indicating cultural practices that maintain a cycle of humiliation and resulting psychological trauma. For example studies show workplace bullying and school bullying at rates of about 20%, these studies must be conservative as many will not countenance discussing such incidences and families, schools and workplaces tend to ignore or play these events down. Suicides and severe addictions are also symptoms of psychological trauma.

The dominator model of interpersonal relationships is embedded deeply into the psyche of mostly western cultures, and it is extremely difficult for many to gather an understanding of this, let alone be interested in dealing with it. For example we are encouraged to look after ourselves first, even at the expense of others. The class mentality we have inherited from the UK is reinforced in many ways, even to the point where we commonly continue to describe groups such as 'lower socioeconomic class', or 'working class'. As an example I recall my wife, who grew up in New Zealand as a child to immigrant Scottish parents, was advised by her mother to 'remember your working class station and don't go beyond it'.

In looking back on my role as a father I can see that I remember striving to gain respect from my children, co-learn and co-seek answers to all their questions. I have never wanted or needed to either physically or psychologically humiliate them and the positive payback we have experienced is evidence in itself. However acting in this manner in a wider society where it is seen as necessary to 'go on the offensive' or 'not be weak' to look after oneself or humiliate others so as to 'stay strong' or 'stay in charge' is difficult. It has been necessary to hold firm, and effectively 'break the cycle of humiliation' in the family context. It has also been necessary to 'inoculate' my children by explaining the socio-cultural situation around us.

This leaves my children in somewhat of a dilemma as they leave school and look to enter the workplace. In most every workplace in New Zealand they will encounter unhealthy workplaces from a psychological point of view but hopefully they will be empowered to be part of the change that is necessary.

The Roots of our Culture

Looking deeper into our cultural roots and mental conditioning it is clear that we have come through a war-readiness culture, then a class culture, and now are heading towards an egalitarian culture. We know that in preparing for war, males are awarded authority and power, and strict top-down organisational structures are necessary. This is in a non-peace context, for survival. Generally war-readiness cultures are uncreative and non-consensual and these are evident in the military and even in the police.

However in peaceful contexts leadership and management can take a much more humanistic form, where equality and creativity can be nurtured. But we continue to apply top-down management and leadership structures as the norm in contemporary society. *Management* has evolved from owner-manager in the industrial revolution to professional management in the last few decades. Both forms of top-down management are usually dysfunctional or usually fail in due course.

The Challenge

For adult New Zealanders today the first challenge is to understand why we think as we do and why the existing dysfunctional elements of our society persist. However to stand back, take a bird's eye view (a systems view) of our socio-cultural setting is not easy as we have to live in this system, with all its inertia and forces that reinforce its existence. It is easier to blame others, or the individual for any given dysfunction than to accept that the problems are 'systematic'. Once we accept that the problems are systematic then, to fix the problems, as individuals and together we must not escape from being part of the solution.

Understanding Humiliation

Humiliation (degradation, bullying, put-downs) is a learned behaviour. The recipient will take it in, and at some point in the future, release it outwards towards others, or release internally towards the self.

External manifestations:

The parent, who has been bullied at work or maltreated as a child, takes it out on his family.

The marginalised or ostracised student at a University may redress the humiliation by arson or shootings or some other form of antisocial behaviour.

Internal manifestations are: lack of self worth, mental illness, self harm, extreme addictions, lack of care or empathy.

The Media

We have a political system where humiliation is the 'currency' and politicians get 'wealthier' or 'poorer' by exchanges of humiliation and perceived levels of credibility.

Michael Laws and Paul Henry are examples of exponents of humiliation in the media. Many in the public unwittingly endorse and enjoy such humiliations within a 'psychological lions den' and this is even more enjoyable when the victims are celebrities – the top-down syndrome. Baying for psychological 'blood' is damaging yet this is seen as harmless fun.

Usually the counter-offering of this argument is 'toughen up, get a life' in other words - be part of that culture.

Solutions

In the context of understanding the cycles of humiliation in the interpersonal, family, school, workplace or other organisational setting we can work on ideas that may, in one form or another, provide a fertile ground in which to grow a non-violent culture. This submission does not focus on interventions 'at the bottom of the cliff'.

Zero to Five Years Old

We treat children as if they are something other than humans, possibly animals. Rather than understanding that a child is an emerging adult we apply techniques not dissimilar to animal training to gain compliance.

The saying 'every child thrives, belongs, achieves' would appear to mean: Every child lives a self-actualising life.

The Learning Environment

A 'learning environment' as opposed to a 'do this' or 'don't do this' or 'ask someone else' or 'don't bother me' environment will ensure the child gains the desire to learn at an early stage. The concept of 'a learning organisation' (Peter Senge MIT) is a way of understanding the 'child centred' approach to schooling and indeed is the concept required for all organisations from family to government. During the pre-school years time needs to be available to deal with children's learning requests.

I have recently been through a golf training coaching programme where 'player or athlete centred' coaching techniques were being espoused. This is a new development and is to be highly encouraged. At younger ages particularly the prime role of the coach is to encourage rather than find successes and failures. From strong community sports environments will emerge elite players.

Learning social skills such as humility and fairness at an early age is important. Also skills that increase equality or equal dignity are of value. It should be noted that the Norwegians have a cultural term 'likeverd' which means of like worth or equal worth.

How can one teach humility or empathy? You can not demand it of children, you can only show it by *being* it.

Child Friendly Cities

This concept has been embraced by some cities in New Zealand see <http://www.childfriendlycities.org>. This concept (or something similar) needs to be adopted by local authorities.

Mental Health in Younger Children

It is known that Schizophrenia and Bipolar disorders occur almost always in the teenage years and it is contended that this is largely a result of children not having led self-actualising lives in their younger years – their psychological needs have not been met.

In younger children *attention disorders* seem to be the main type of complaints. Recently we heard on Radio NZ National from Nancy Andreasen regarding the relationship between creativity and mental illness. It is contended that ADHD type children need 'hyper-environments' in which to learn. They are, if nurtured in such environments, will be likely to go on to be very creative, valuable thinking and imaginative people. 'Hyper' environments need to be designed that do not isolate individuals but retain socialisation.

Creativity and innovation are not nurtured or respected in mainstream NZ society enough as we are 'prepared' by others to earn money in productive or service

settings. Furthermore we concentrate on academic achievement as the winner and all else less so, expecting all our creativity and invention to come from Universities.

Poverty

Poverty runs as a continuum from dying of starvation (absolute poverty) to less extreme forms (e.g. not visiting a doctor because payment can not be made). In New Zealand we don't have children dying from starvation (I trust) but we do have children dying from violence and poverty related diseases.

Social exclusion and being seen (or seeing oneself) as a failure probably are the worst by-products of this form of *relative* poverty. This engenders lack of empathy and increase in crime.

Work on the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) is probably the first step here. When we move from GDP (*all activity*) as our measure of well-being to a *benefit against cost* GPI will we see that reducing costs associated with poverty will be a win-win situation across all income levels in society.

Early School Age 5-12 years

In this age group children become less co-consciously dependant on their parents and continue to exert their individuality and creativity, yet they do not have full knowledge of acceptable social and interpersonal behaviour.

In New Zealand we lament the number of creative and innovative people and businesses. This is because we over-control children and destroy their creative impulses and will to learn. However Primary schools are improving and adopting more open child-centred learning techniques and this is to be encouraged.

Parenting behaviours that put children at risk are intended or unintended humiliations, for example if a child bumps over a paint pot they are called 'stupid'. Repeated such behaviour towards a child will engender hatred and/or self hatred).

Humility also needs to be introduced by parents and demonstrated through displaying such emotions. It is at this age that I feel children need to understand and practice empathy and be 'inoculated' against the cycle of humiliation. This will prepare them well so as to take a transformative position at high school and beyond.

Teenage Years

I know of at least two people who were very creative, questioning and challenging in their early years. Others, including parents used to discourage them, physically and/or mentally assault them or ostracize them. We know that the mainstream schooling system does not cater for these people who display all the base abilities we need as a society. One of these people committed suicide at the age of 21 after having been diagnosed as schizophrenic and having had his pilots licence taken off him. The other person is being treated for paranoia/schizophrenia successfully and has attempted suicide in the past.

I also know of two women who have severe bi-polar disorders, but are also very intelligent, creative persons. Both these women were beaten or severely

psychologically abused as children. Denial of self-determination/expression and living in a fearful, humiliating and non-creative environment will lead to mental illness.

Addictions and harm, or finding alternative accepting non-empathetic communities such as gangs are alternative ways of dealing with the abuse.

To inoculate children against the downside effects of humiliation they need to understand the socio-cultural environment in which they live and be prepared to stand up to the forces that might pull them in.

Ken Robinson's popular video 'Why Schools Kill Creativity' is a valuable insight into the problem with the way schools operate against the overall wellbeing of society.

Preparing for the Workplace

It is necessary to analyse the predominant workplace culture in the context of an adolescent preparing him/herself to enter it.

We know that most workplace cultures in New Zealand are a source of dysfunction, low productivity and undue stress. Many feel they have to be there rather than want to be there. Many say that this must be accepted and one needs to learn to cope.

This matter does extend into the wider issues of profit maximisation, command and control, excessive consumption and unlimited growth but will not be covered here.

If students can enter a workplace that has a culture of a 'learning organisation' using Eupsychian (good for the mind, happy) management techniques (Maslow) then the chances of enjoyment in the workplace will be more common.

Teenagers need to have the opportunity to learn sustainability through subjects such as:

- Globalisation
- Extreme capitalism
- The Money System
- Political Systems
- Religious Systems
- Energy Systems

Also everyone needs to have the opportunity to understand psychology. This subject is not just for psychologists.

Adults

It is understandable that few New Zealand adults look deeply into cultural matters. Generally they have come through a system that encourages compliance and little alternative thought. We tend to listen to the views of people then pigeon-hole them into some category, be it liberal, conservative etc.

We have a system that rewards winners and we think of people on *levels*, rather than in *roles*. The cycle of low self esteem with its attendant dysfunction exists within this system.

We then castigate, pity or otherwise denigrate those who do not buy into or succeed with status and dollars in this model. A truly egalitarian society can not logically follow this model.

Social Innovation

As for any form of innovation, creativity and lateral thinking is needed to break from the current borders of thinking to achieve real improvement. Awkward discussions need to be had.

An Example Idea:

The dysfunctional workplace. We know from studies that the common workplace in New Zealand has symptoms of dysfunction, yet people do not understand why. They either blame bosses or workers or co-workers. Dysfunction and stress is spread into the family, thereby affecting children.

The employee/employer relationship is severely affected with differing expectations and division – all unnecessary.

The Government should build industrial legislation that distinguishes between a *transactional* relationship and a *transformational* relationship between employees and employers. This process in itself would clear up understandings and expectations on both sides and place a value in each. I can explain further if requested.

Final Remark

I run the risk of being pigeon-holed as an left wing or liberal thinking person. However I am centrist in my politics, am self-employed and developing a start-up business. I am also a systems thinker. I offer this submission as an individual who has concern for the well-being of our collective future.

I wish to thank the Government for the opportunity to make this submission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Ward', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brian Ward
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Appendices Below

Appendix 1

Parenting Styles, and their Impact on Children: Humiliation, Abuse and Neglect

Lindner, Evelin Gerda (2005). Parenting Styles, and their Impact on Children:
Humiliation, Abuse and Neglect. In *Sahil*, 14 (32, April-June), 9

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For thousands of years, almost everywhere on the globe, humankind believed in hierarchically ranking human value. Almost everybody thought that some people were born as *higher* beings and others as *lower* beings. This was called the “order of nature” or “divine order.” The cradle of democracy, the Greek city state of about 2,000 years ago - just to give you one example out of many - was adamant that women and slaves, per definition, had no voice.

Any pain or suffering that those had to endure who had their place somewhere at the bottom of the pyramid of power was deemed to be *necessary pain* or *prosocial humbling*. Through thousands of years, underlings’ sufferings were regarded as “good” for them and “fruitful” for the health of society as a whole. Beating underlings, for example, was usually regarded not as abuse, but as legitimate means to “remind” them of their “due” place. Vaccinations or surgical operation, albeit painful, are generally accepted as “good treatment” for patients; this is a positive view of pain that everybody sympathizes with. Similarly, for millennia, underlings’ pain was seen as “good treatment” for underlings and the health of society altogether.

Strict Father Model

Parents typically were central to reproducing obedient underlings. Alice Miller (1983), spelled out how, in the period that lead up to the two World Wars, leading pedagogues of the time regarded *breaking the will of the child* as essential for childrearing. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) describe the underlying framework with what they call the *Strict Father model* (as opposed to the *Nurturant Parent model*):

The father has authority to determine the policy that will govern the family. Because of his moral authority, his commands are to be obeyed. He teaches his children right from wrong by setting strict rules for their behavior and by setting a moral example in

his own life. He enforces these moral rules by reward and punishment. The father also gains his children's cooperation by showing love and by appreciating them when they obey the rules. But children must not be coddled, lest they become spoiled. A spoiled child lacks the appropriate moral values and lacks the moral strength and discipline necessary for living independently and meeting life's challenges. The mother has day-to-day responsibility for the care of the household, raising the children; and upholding the father's authority. Children must respect and obey their parents, because of the parents' moral authority. Through their obedience they learn the discipline and self-reliance that is necessary to meet life's challenges. This self-discipline develops in them strong moral character. Love and nurturance are a vital part of family life, but they should never outweigh parental authority, which is itself an expression of love and nurturance – tough love. As children mature, the virtues of respect for moral authority, self-reliance, and self-discipline allow them to incorporate their father's moral values. In this way they incorporate their father's moral authority they become self-governing and self-legislating (Lakoff & Johnson (1999), pp. 313-314).

The result is described by Lakoff and Johnson as follows, Evidence from three areas of psychological research – attachment theory, socialization theory, and family violence studies – shows that the Strict Father model ... tends to produce children who are dependent on the authority of others, cannot chart their own moral course very well, have less of a conscience, are less respectful of others, and have no greater ability to resist temptations (Lakoff & Johnson (1999), p. 327).

Thus, the *Strict Father model* seems to produce what Theodor Adorno called the *authoritarian personality* whose principal characteristic is obedience and preparedness to blindly following orders, irrespective of their moral contents (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford (1950)).

Nurturant Parent Model

Around 300 - 250 years ago, the Human Rights revolution began to undermine the belief that it is "nature's order" to have *lower* and *higher* beings. In 1757, a new meaning of the word *humiliation* emerged. Up to 1757 the verb *to humiliate* meant nothing worse than *to lower* or *to humble*, or to *show underlings their legitimate lowly place*, without any connotation that this may also signify an illegitimate violation. This we learn from the *Oxford English Dictionary* with regard to the English language. I quote from Miller (1993), who informs us that "the earliest recorded use of *to humiliate* meaning to mortify or to lower or to depress the dignity or self-respect of someone does not occur until 1757."

Article 1 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." This declaration represents a revolution insofar as it upsets the hierarchical ranking of human worthiness that was in place for millennia and calls for a new order, namely the order of *equal dignity for all*. In this new order it is regarded illegitimate to put down people; putting down people, beating and punishing them cruelly, is no longer labeled as "prosocial humbling" but as abusive *antisocial humiliation*. As might be expected, this revolution has consequences also for parenting.

Lakoff and Johnson allude to this when they describe the *Nurturant Parent model* of rearing children. This model describes a parenting style that abides by the new Human Rights ideals. What formerly was regarded as “good” for children, turns into abuse and neglect in the new nurturant framework.

Many parents fear that being nurturant means being lenient and permissive. Yet, nurturant parenting has nothing to do with leniency. It combines firmness with respect for equal dignity. Lakoff and Johnson write, “Nurturant Parent morality is not, in itself, overly permissive. Just as letting children do whatever they want is not good for them, so helping other people to do whatever they please is likewise not proper nurturance. There are limits to what other people should be allowed to do, and genuine nurturance involves setting boundaries and expecting others to act responsibly” (Lakoff & Johnson (1999), p. 316).

The point with the Nurturing Parent model is that “lessons” are no longer taught by putting down children. “Breaking” children is no longer permissible. “Lessons” are now to be taught with firm love and humility, no longer by applying humiliation. To summarize, we all, parents included, live in the midst of a historic transition from concepts of *ranked human worthiness* to visions of *equal dignity for all*. We all are embedded in some way or another within this transition, either by welcoming it or resisting it, and in all cases by being confused by it. It is a difficult transition even for the most fervent human rights enthusiast because it is easy to lose orientation.

We lose orientation not least because old recipes still sound so “right.” For example, is it so bad to sometimes hit a child? Have we not all survived such treatment? And was it not to our own good? And what about the treatment of women? Should not women be careful not to lose their “femininity” [= submissiveness as *lower beings*]? Many such questions confuse our minds in times of transition.

What we have not yet developed are new proverbs and new sayings that sound equally “right” as the old ones. The new world is not yet there while the old world disappears. We need to develop new language, new proverbs and sentences that highlight that “lessons” are no longer to be taught by humiliation, but with love and humility.

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The Ultimate Human Right: The Right to Self Actualisation

An Engineer's Perspective

Introduction

I am a 59 year old male, trained and experienced in civil engineering, specifically traffic and transportation engineering. I have a professional engineering qualification that requires me to adhere to a code of ethics as follows:

Protection of Life and Safeguarding People: Members shall recognise the need to protect life and to safeguard people, and in their engineering activities shall act to address this need.

Professionalism, Integrity and Competence: Members shall undertake their engineering activities with professionalism and integrity and shall work within their levels of competence.

Commitment to Community Well-being: Members shall recognise the responsibility of the profession to actively contribute to the well-being of society and, when involved in any engineering activity shall endeavour to identify, inform and consult affected parties.

Sustainable Management and Care for the Environment: Members shall recognise and respect the need for sustainable management of the planet's resources and endeavour to minimise adverse environmental impacts of their engineering activities for both present and future generations.

Sustaining Engineering Knowledge: Members shall seek to contribute to the development of their own and the engineering profession's knowledge, skill and expertise for the benefit of society.

I consider myself lucky to be part of the engineering profession. It is one where you can use creative and innovative thought to improve the safety and wellbeing of people. Incidentally, I have often thought why the above ethics generally could not be a code for everyone (with minor modification for role), regardless of what they do (maybe except for the military!).

So, through engineering and in following this code of ethics, I look for ways to improve the well being of others.

About This Paper

I originally wrote this paper as a contribution towards looking for a non-killing (non-violent) paradigm as a member of the Non-killing Science Research Committee of the Centre for Global Non-Killing). www.cgknk.org. This paper is essentially a non-published draft.

Although I use my engineering and parental experiences as a background, this paper delves more widely into what I think makes up a creative and innovative psyche.

I think that the general movement of a person's creativity and innovative thought, when nurtured throughout life within a learning environment of free self expression, will lead to self actualization.

I am of the view that, if more humans can stay on the psychological path to complete self actualization then, amongst other things, the incidence of violence must decrease within society.

A Foundational Viewpoint

I concur with this following statement:

Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers emphasized a view of the person as an active, creative, experiencing human being who lives in the present and subjectively responds to current perceptions, relationships, and encounters. They disagree with the dark, pessimistic outlook of those in the Freudian psychoanalysis ranks, but rather view humanistic theories as positive, optimistic which stress the tendency of the human personality toward growth and self-actualization. This progressing self will remain the center of its constantly changing world; a world that will help mold the self but not necessarily confine it. Rather, the self has opportunity for maturation based on its encounters with this world. This understanding attempts to reduce the acceptance of hopeless redundancy. – Wikipedia

In my terms I think the basic human psyche is inherently positive, rather than inherently negative or neither positive nor negative.

The Path to Self Actualization

I feel that, if a person is able to remain on the path to self actualization, then, at some point in their mature life they will undergo a shift in consciousness into complete self actualization. This shift in consciousness is explained more by a many number of people in their own way. For instance Gerald Heard, in his book *The Five Ages of Man* describes the fifth age as leptoid man, a person that has taken a leap in consciousness, and is described as having 'post-individual consciousness' a psychological mindset that focuses on others and not the self. Another description that aligns with self actualization or post-individual consciousness is 'Unity Consciousness' as described by Malcolm Hollick in his book *The Science of Oneness*. There are many other similar descriptions throughout the published world and indeed you may discover a connection with these concepts in your own life.

In essence by reaching complete self actualization you are at 'Nirvana' psychologically. The world around you may not always be beautiful but you see beauty and potential in a much wider sense than ever before.

Many people who reach complete self actualization may express their consciousness in quite diverse ways. Wikipedia describes the following common traits of people who have reached self-actualization as:

- They embrace reality and facts rather than denying truth.
- They are spontaneous.
- They are interested in solving problems.
- They are accepting of themselves and others and lack prejudice.

Other factors that may be common include:

- They continually seek knowledge
- They are creative and think outside the square
- They are freely self expressive and respect others freedom of expression

In my attempt to explain the concept I will describe below in more detail the path to self actualization and what interventions might prevent a person from staying on it, or what factors might cause a person to be knocked off it, either temporarily or permanently. The path will take its route through Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as depicted in the diagram below.

In simple terms I believe the **right to self actualization** is the **ultimate human right**. All other human rights are a prerequisite to this right.

I also think that as more people stay on the path of self actualization then the world will see more sustainability and peace.

Lateral Thinking, Creativity and Enlightenment

We live in an environment of constant change. Encouragement to be creative and think laterally will mean we can meet the needs of change. It is not difficult to see how for engineering, problem solving requires lateral thinking and innovation. However this surely applies to all areas of human endeavour.

The arts nurture creative thought. It is imperative for humans to live their lives in an environment of freedom of thought and expression so as to maximize their potential for creativity. This leads to psychological wellbeing and self actualization.

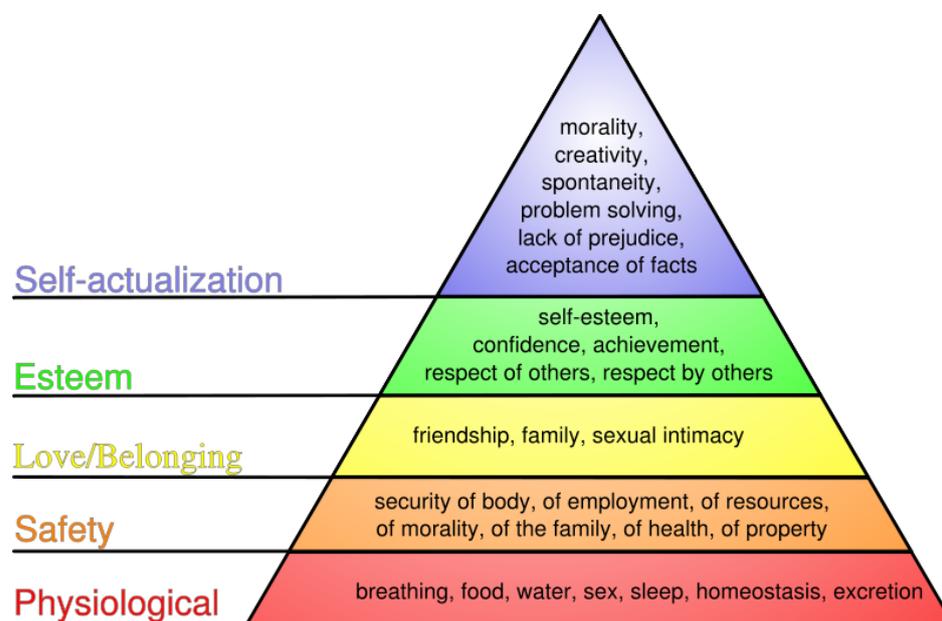
Killing other people for whatever reason does not meet any human need. That does not mean you should not defend yourself. Creativity and innovative thought can provide answers to many problems, including smart defence. To succumb to the security dilemma by proactive killing is not the answer. Dialogue is.

Enlightenment is a person's release from self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is the incapacity to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. Such tutelage is self-imposed if its cause is not lack of intelligence, but rather a lack of determination and courage to use one's intelligence without being guided by another.

Enlightenment, in Immanuel Kant's definition, is the ability to question, *dare to know* and be prepared to propose ideas with the possibility of being proven wrong or to fail. Failure to propose correctly is not a failure, but an integral part of a learning process that contributes to new knowledge within a continuous learning environment. Only failing to learn from failure could be termed true failure.

So, in the continual learning process we challenge by using our free and lateral thought and expression, we question and are not oppressed by any form of dogma, previous thought-decision, cultural practice or illogical reasoning.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



1. Physiological Needs (Homeostasis)

These are our most basic needs to survive such as air, water, sleep. Homeostasis (psychological and physiological equilibrium in an optimal environment) is the overall description of meeting the needs.

These are constant needs throughout one's life and, given the millions of people starving around the world, it is easy to see how many are denied the opportunity to even start on the path to self actualization.

For example: how could I possibly be truly creative when I am constantly having to look for food?

2. Safety Needs

If you live with the fear of being under threat of losing the ability to live safely within your environment then clearly your safety needs are not being met.

Many people live in war-torn environments where the rule of reasonable law does not exist, and there is little trust. I am lucky to live in an environment where these needs are all met. However many children, women and some minority racial groups and others do not feel as safe in the same environment I live in due to outdated laws and cultural practices.

3. Love and Belonging

This is the need for social connection. Being comfortable that you live in an environment where you can interact with others and know you are accepted is very important.

4. Self Esteem

The need for self esteem means you are prepared to be creative, have self confidence and there is mutual respect with others.

5. Self Actualization

This is not so much of a need but that of the end goal. The ultimate living experience occurs when one is living in a truly self actualized state. A state of ataraxia exists.

Freedom of Self Expression

I liken the psychological journey through life as someone walking along the path to self actualization on a narrow wooden beam, and there are objects flying over the beam that may strike the walker and knock them off the beam. The walker may or may not be able to get back onto the beam.

If, throughout one's life, the freedom of self expression is nurtured, protected and practiced then, one will be living a *self actualizing* life and in time, complete self actualization will be achieved and maintained. This is the positive form of post-individual consciousness as described by Gerald Heard.

To study this we can study Maslow's hierarchy of needs alongside each of Gerald Heard's five crises psychological states. Stumbling from one crisis state to the next means there is considerable risk that you may not reach the end, that is, you will be knocked off the beam and may or may not get back on.

Gerald Heard's Five 'Ages' of Man

1. The preindividual (Co-conscious man)

In the first few years of life children are pre-individuals, they rely on their parents and/or others to nurture their individuality. Children need to live co-consciously (psychologically) with others.

Children's psychological development will be impaired if their individuality is prevented from emerging. This can occur by way of exposure to trauma, abuse, bullying, or deprivation of the first four needs as a young child - physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, and self esteem.

Lack of timely, accurate knowledge, including explanations between fact and belief, will also impair the development of the child's will to learn and is the starting point for distrust and paranoia.

The reaction to impaired psychological development will be a transition into the next (crisis) state.

2. The protoindividual (Heroic, self assertive man)

The second psychological phase is the proto-individual person where individuality is demanded as it was not nurtured at the coconscious period. Self assertion occurs, risk taking and generally a push to establish self authority and self esteem. Parents and others in authority positions will react to this strongly and (unknowingly) make a second attempt to impair the development of individuality by attempting corrective authority.

3. The midindividual (Ascetic, self accusing man)

The ordeal of adolescence is for teenagers to have to deal with, after being convinced there is authority to follow, they have doubt that they can oblige. The strong will for individuality and self expression disappears, and a schizophrenic condition may result.

Many rigid institutions such as schools, religions, and the military become the face of authority and the gates to acceptance socially. In western society particularly, the creativity potential arising from individual self expression is beaten down hence the loss of innovative thought. We end up with masses of overly *compliant*, and largely uncreative people.

4. The total individual (Humanic, self-sufficient man)

Arising as a reaction to the mid-individual ordeal is to enter the total-individual ordeal where the 'warrior' or Heroic phase begins. As an adult, self-authority is practiced

and total individualism (in many cases with a rampant ego) takes place only to be found out over time that it is a misapprehension.

Manic depression may occur, or retraction into subservience to another authority, or a transformation into the post-individual psychological state may result.

5. The postindividual (Leptoid man)

If this point is reached via the previous four crises states then self actualization is less likely and involitional melancholy may prevail. Alternatively, If an individual has lived a life of freedom of self expression, then self actualization will complete itself.

Malcolm Hollick and Christine Connelly, in their book *Hope for Humanity* covers the effects of trauma. Trauma, in many cases, can invoke a transformation leading to self actualization, but it is not seen as a fundamental or legitimate necessity in the human experience.

Walking the Beam to Self Actualization – How to Dodge the Missiles

It is appreciated that many cultures prevent freedom of self expression and many of the following suggestions of how to dodge the missiles may not be possible. Further down I discuss evolutionary change and even though we might think things are hopeless and at a standstill, they are actually not.

Manage Authority

Throughout your life you will be confronted with authority. Try to distinguish between authentic or valid authority from false or manipulative authority. Look back at your life and try and distinguish your experiences of unnecessary and necessary authority.

Also look at whether unnecessary authority is impeding your freedom of self expression or whether you can discard its effects without it having any effect on you.

Discern Facts from Beliefs

It is fine to have beliefs as long as you know them to be beliefs and not facts. If you are unsure, be prepared to learn and discuss with others.

Also, be open to learning about all belief systems and religions and respect the fact that other people have their own beliefs.

Learn about Humiliation and Authentic (true) Dignity

To me there are two forms of dignity, true dignity (intrinsic) and false dignity (extrinsic). True dignity is equal for everyone and false dignity has different levels based on various ranking systems devised by humans.

False dignity is associated with status being bestowed whereas true dignity is the inherent equal dignity we all have as humans. A person with bestowed dignity (e.g. a Queen) may or may not understand the difference between the two. Similarly people in poverty may think they have less dignity than those who are not.

Break the Cycles of Humiliation and Violence

When a person or group or nation is humiliated, that is they are debased by some form of humiliating action by others, then they may react violently in an attempt to redress their loss of dignity. Others may internalize their humiliation and be harmful to themselves or bottle it up inside.

Understanding the psychological dynamic of the cycles of humiliation and violence will help in creating ways of breaking the cycles.

The Diamond Rule

In response to a discussion on the Golden Rule (Do unto others as you would have them do unto you), or the Platinum Rule (Treat others as they would like to be treated) I wondered why we have cultural practices that go against these rules. I thought that there may be a better (Diamond) rule - 'Do not humiliate others' in other words, protect the psychological well being of others.

Understanding Systematic (or evolutionary) Change

Changes to human systems, particularly societal and cultural norms, happen over many years, or even generations. For example, equality for women in a certain area may be enacted in law, but it is only when each person enacts complete equality at a personal thought level (and action) will actual change take place.

Another example: In New Zealand, it has become law that, parents or adults are not permitted to physically punish children in the name of achieving discipline. Not only does this law permit a safety need in children to be met, it allows children to hold on to their self expression and self esteem which, in turn, will nurture a creative and positive person. People look at the enactment of this law and, after a year or so said: See! The law isn't working, there are still violent actions being carried out against children! Or they say: 'The law isn't working – there are more undisciplined children than ever! The law is simply an agent of change - change is slow and will take generations.

Like dignity, false (extrinsic) discipline is that imposed by authority. True discipline (intrinsic) comes from within by staying on the beam to self actualization, and features an inherent mutual respect for society by continually seeking fairness.

Abortion, Euthanasia, Vegetarianism, Dementia

At the time of writing this paper I queried how the issues of abortion, euthanasia and vegetarianism are resolved in a non-killing paradigm. I have not gone into this in depth but propose some thoughts and ideas. In simple terms if we reduce psychological distress then other health and well-being issues may diminish.

Abortion and Euthanasia

If we study Maslow's needs and Heard's crises psychological states, it may be that, if the person in question is suffering or has suffered from a severe lack of these needs, then there will be adverse health conditions present such that extreme remedial measures like abortion or euthanasia might be contemplated (by some) as a remedy.

If we can reduce the incidence of such adverse health conditions then the vexed issues of abortion and euthanasia may diminish.

Vegetarianism

This would appear to be an issue of global homeostasis and nutritional engineering. Through innovation in food and nutrition, combined with the principle of systematic or evolutionary change we may well see (or be seeing) an incremental move away from the need for humans to consume animals for nutrition.

Dementia

I often wonder if the disease of elderly dementia is related to a lack of creative thought and activity throughout one's life.

The Need for Diversity

In an engineering and constructive sense the wider the diversity of knowledge brought into any given project, the better the outcome is likely to be. This will be even more so if those contributing to the project have a combination of unique knowledge and good creative, innovative abilities.

In wider human systems and cultures there is a fundamental need to retain and embrace diversity so that we retain access to the broad spectrum of knowledge, experience and ideas.

Organisations to Support Innovation

I have repeated a paragraph from above:

Enlightenment in Immanuel Kant's definition is the ability to question, dare to know and be prepared to propose ideas with the possibility of being proven wrong or to fail. Failure to propose correctly is not a failure, but an integral part of a learning

process that contributes to new knowledge within a continuous learning environment. Only failing to learn from failure could be termed true failure.

To achieve innovative change we need to structure organizations that move away from being risk averse, shaming and blaming, maximum profit driven, and hierarchical.

Organisations need to be transformational, and Eupsychian, that is able to learn and make change as and when necessary, and inclusive, that is one that allows for full employee participation.

Thanks

I trust these thoughts and ideas of mine to nurture a non-killing paradigm from an engineer's point of view are helpful. I would like to acknowledge Dr Evelin Lindner and the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies network for the knowledge and support that I have been very fortunate to receive. Also, I would like to acknowledge Abraham Maslow, Gerald Heard and many other writers and thinkers whose work I have enjoyed reading.

Kind Regards
Brian Ward

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