

# ETHICS EDUCATION OF BUSINESS LEADERS

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis offers a conceptual justification for the application of virtue ethics in a secular setting as a modified form of education for emotional intelligence supported by contemplative practices. Emotions and their regulation are considered as vital for ethical development. The difficulties in delivering ethics education in business schools where it is assumed that human moral decision-making is predominately conscious and reason-based will be considered. It is acknowledged that this orientation of ethics education in business schools is difficult to change because it is based on our western culture's deep roots and emphasis on science and reason that business schools embrace. To address this scientific orientation, recent neuroscience findings are presented, arguing that while reason plays an important role in moral development, in fact unconscious processes and emotions play a much more significant role in moral behaviour. Following this, Daoist contemplative practices that emphasize the value of the unconscious and emotions are broadly investigated for insights that may inform ethics education. Scientifically supported aspects of contemplative practices are identified, and an ethics pedagogy for business leaders that incorporates emotional intelligence and contemplative practices is proposed. An account is given of the introduction of such a program in a business undergraduate course at the University of British Columbia, Sauder School of Business. This study is interdisciplinary, drawing from virtue ethics, Daoist thinking, psychology, and neuroscience to inform ethics pedagogy. The research orientation of this thesis is towards making a practical contribution to the advancement of teaching ethics in a business school setting.

**Keywords:** Business Leader, Ethics, Pedagogy,

**Subject Terms:** Virtue Ethics, Emotional Intelligence, Daoism, Contemplation, Neuroscience, Psychology.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my parents Douglas and Eileen Culham, my wife Eugenia, and my son and daughter Nathaniel and Felicia. I would not have been able to complete this project without their support.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Dedication .....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents .....	vii
<b>Chapter 1: Background, Context, Overview, and Guiding Philosophy.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Early Influences.....	1
A Window to a Different Worldview .....	2
Early Flashes of Intuition and Later Contemplative Practice .....	3
Discovering that Emotions, Intentions and Values Matter .....	5
Why Study Ethics and Learn Virtue?.....	9
An Overview of the Thesis .....	12
Thesis Style and Content .....	13
References.....	17
<b>Chapter 2: Emotional Intelligence Meets Virtue Ethics: Implications for Educators .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Tom Culham and Heesoon Bai (Simon Fraser University, Canada) .....</b>	<b>20</b>
Preamble.....	20
Educators’ Emotions are No Private Matter .....	23
Limitations of Goleman et al.’s EI as an Educational Project .....	26
MacIntyre’s Virtue Ethics.....	28
<i>Telos</i> and Unity of Life.....	31
Centrality of Practice and the Role of Tradition in Virtue Ethics .....	33
Reasons of the Heart and Intrinsic Value .....	38
Implications for Education .....	45
References.....	48
Opening the Doors of Inner Perception .....	51
<b>Chapter 3: Emotional Intelligence as a Component of Business Ethics Pedagogy.....</b>	<b>56</b>
Preamble.....	56
Business Schools and Ethics .....	57
Business Student’s Attitude to Learning Ethics .....	59
Philosophical Concerns Regarding Ethics Pedagogy.....	60
Reasoning is Largely Unconscious, Undergirded by Emotion and Physiology.....	65
Emotions are Important in Moral Decision Making .....	68
Virtue Ethics: An Appropriate Ethics Pedagogy Considering Empirical Concerns.....	70
Emotional Intelligence and Ethics Education.....	71

Conclusions.....	73
References.....	74
Opening to Passion in the Classroom.....	79
Reference.....	84
<b>Chapter 4 Nourishing Life, the Daoist Concept of Virtue 德.....</b>	<b>85</b>
Preamble.....	85
Daoist Contemplative Practices and Business Ethics.....	85
Caveats in Considering Ancient Daoist Sources.....	90
Rationale for Selecting the <i>Neiye</i> 內業 and <i>Huainanzi</i> 淮南子.....	92
Overview of Daoist Key Concepts in the <i>Neiye</i> 內業 and <i>Huainanzi</i> 淮南子.....	95
The Daoist Concept of Virtue <i>Dé</i> 德.....	95
The Daoist Concept of <i>Dao</i> 道.....	96
The Relationship of <i>Dao</i> 道 and <i>Dé</i> 德.....	99
<i>Qi</i> 氣 and its Relationship to <i>Dao</i> 道 and Humans 人.....	101
Daoist Cultivation of Virtue: Emotions ( <i>Qing</i> ) 情, Innate Nature ( <i>Xing</i> ) 性, Mind ( <i>Xin</i> ) 心 and Tranquility ( <i>Jing</i> ) 靜.....	103
References.....	107
Divining Virtue.....	110
<b>Chapter 5 Cultivation of Virtue (<i>dé</i>) 德 According to the <i>Neiye</i> 內業.....</b>	<b>112</b>
Preamble.....	112
Interpreting the First Two Verses as a Summary of Inner Cultivation.....	113
Emergence and Tranquility in the <i>Neiye</i> .....	115
Inner Cultivation: Alignment to Enable Tranquillity to Emerge.....	116
Inner Cultivation and Physical Tranquillity.....	117
Inner Cultivation and Mental Tranquillity.....	119
Inner Cultivation and Awareness.....	121
Inner Cultivation and Outcomes in Daily Life.....	122
Inner Cultivation—Emotions and Emergence.....	123
Inner Cultivation Process Summary.....	124
Distinguishing Between Self-conscious and Emergent Unself-conscious Virtue.....	126
Ethics Education: Insights.....	131
References.....	133
Discovering Tranquillity.....	134
References.....	138
<b>Chapter 6 Cultivation of Virtuous Leaders According to the <i>Huainanzi</i> 淮南子.....</b>	<b>139</b>
Preamble.....	139
Innate Nature and Emotions According to the <i>Huainanzi</i> .....	140
The Mind According to the <i>Huainanzi</i> .....	147
Nuances on Tranquility According to the <i>Huainanzi</i> .....	151
Ethics Pedagogy Insights.....	152

References .....	154
A Near Life Experience .....	156
Reference:.....	159
<b>Chapter 7: Is There a Place for Contemplation and Inner Work in Business Ethics Education? .....</b>	<b>160</b>
Preamble.....	160
An Interpretation of Recent Neuroscience and Psychology: Triune Ethics Theory .....	166
Mature Moral Functioning and Regulation of Emotions.....	170
The Shortcomings in Narvaez’s Approach to Emotion Regulation .....	173
The Contribution of Contemplation to Emotional Regulation.....	175
The Contribution of EI Development to Emotional Regulation .....	179
Do Unconscious Processes Promote Emotional Growth?.....	181
Does Contemplation Contribute to Mature Moral Functioning? .....	188
Do Contemplative Practices and EI Development Make a Contribution to Ethics Pedagogy? .....	191
References .....	196
Discovering Gratitude.....	203
References.....	207
<b>Chapter 8 Incorporating the Inner Work of EI and Contemplation in Ethics Education .....</b>	<b>208</b>
Preamble.....	208
Overview of EI-based and Contemplative Practice-infused Approach to Business Ethics Education .....	209
The Inner Work of EI Development and Contemplation .....	211
How Inner Work Engages Emotions and Contributes to Ethics.....	213
Introductory Lecture: Inner Work: Engaging Students .....	214
Completion of an EI Survey .....	215
Exercise to Explore One’s Ideal Self.....	215
Exercise to Explore One’s Current Self.....	216
Contemplative Exercises .....	217
Journaling .....	220
Developing Social Competencies .....	222
The Initial EI Report .....	227
The Final EI Report.....	228
Engaging Students in Business Values and Ethics Concepts .....	231
Contribution of Ethics Concepts to Ethical Development .....	233
Looking to the Future .....	236
Action Research.....	236
Further Conceptual Research.....	237
A Proposed Comprehensive Approach to Ethics Education of Business Leaders .....	240
Parting Thought.....	243
References.....	244

# **CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND, CONTEXT, OVERVIEW, AND GUIDING PHILOSOPHY**

## **Early Influences**

I grew up in Toronto Ontario in a white Anglo Saxon protestant community. We went to church and ate roast beef on Sunday. In my family, talking about emotions was taboo. It was how my parents were raised and their parents before them. My father relied on rational thinking and regarded emotions as frivolous. He was an engineer who helped design the Avro Arrow, a famous Canadian leading edge military jet of the 1950s. We were fully imbued with the rationalist mindset, and as far as I was concerned, scientific evidence trumped personal experience. Emotions and feelings were suspect and had to be avoided. This way of thinking and being was the water we swam in. Little did I know that my family ethos and values were influenced and shaped by the European Enlightenment Project that originated in the 17th century, and Newtonian physics. This thesis owes its origin to my dawning and growing self-understanding of a view that differs from the perspective of my upbringing. I now understand explicitly why I am trying to teach emotional intelligence and contemplative inquiry to students in business ethics courses.

## **A Window to a Different Worldview**

My work life was a continuation of my upbringing. Early in my career, I spent 10 years with Sandwell, an engineering company doing projects domestically and internationally. Subsequently I worked in the BC forest industry, first as a lobbyist for the Council of Forest Industries of BC, and later in manufacturing for Weldwood of Canada Ltd. My work life was fully engaged in activities considered mainstream.

My personal interests provided a window through which a different view could emerge. In the early 70s, I began reading Carl Gustav Jung (1983) who was—I later discovered—influenced by Daoist thinking. I felt an instant affinity for Jung's work and fully credit him with opening the door of my thinking to a different perspective. I began reading Buddhist and Daoist texts and felt like I was leading a double-life: an engineer by day, an aspiring philosopher by night. I continued reading Asian philosophies to the early 1990s when I reached a point where I was prepared to move from reading philosophy to take up a practice. I wanted to experience the material I had been reading and took up a secular form of Buddhist practice: Vipassana meditation. These early experiences offered me glimpses of how a meditative practice might alter one's perspective, but it did not alter my views or perspectives. Not yet. The fortress of my childhood family, schooling, and cultural influences was still holding out strong.

## **Early Flashes of Intuition and Later Contemplative Practice**

My work context suggested that rational logical thought was not the only path to solving business and engineering problems. On one occasion early in my career, I solved a particularly difficult bug in a computer program in an unorthodox way. After being frustrated by days of applying the usual techniques to solve bugs, I randomly flipped open the large stack paper on which the code was printed (this was before the days of computer screens) and randomly ran my finger down lines of code and stopped without looking or thinking. There, where my finger stopped, was the bug!

In the 1990s, I used to play hockey. I wasn't very good at it but I really enjoyed it. On one occasion when my turn to play came, I jumped over the boards and a short video-like image flashed in my mind showing me that a goal would be scored. Within the next two minutes, a goal was scored exactly as I had seen it. This happened several times again while playing hockey, which occasioned me to realize that it wasn't a fluke but some kind of phenomenon. While I had had intuitive experiences before, I had never experienced this vividness. These experiences challenged my worldview in a way that would not have been possible if someone had simply told me about them.

Experiences like these motivated me to consider a PhD in education under the supervision of an academician who was able to encompass both the western-modern thought paradigm and eastern

contemplative paradigm. I felt that the kinds of unusual experiences I was having were an important aspect of problem solving that was not addressed in any education I had experienced.

In 1996, I commenced learning *qigong*, a contemplative practice with origins in China and rooted primarily in Daoism, with Buddhist and Confucian influences. My first experience with *qigong* is typical of many of my experiences early in my practice. In the first session of a six-week program, I felt very uncomfortable because the style of teaching appeared to be a series of unrelated stories interspersed with some discussion of Chinese and *qigong* cosmology that to me appeared to be nonsense. There seemed to be no form to the instruction, which was disconcerting to someone used to a didactic form of teaching. Further, the presented cosmology was primarily Daoist.

While I had read about it previously I could not connect *qigong* in any practical way to my conception of the universe and myself. Briefly, the cosmology holds that everything is connected through a life-force referred to as *qi*, and that the individual is a microcosm of the universe. Everything is in flux, with no beginning or no end. Matter is not separate from the mind, the mind is not separate from emotion, and the universe does not run on linear causality, and so on. None of this fit with my western, Christian, and scientific cosmology. What was I to make of *qigong*? It made no sense: nonsense.

Despite my previous reading and interest, I left the first session with the intention not to continue: it departed too far from my expectations regarding cosmology and teaching. The next day at work, however, I experienced a physical sense of calm, tranquility, and lightness that was unmistakable and unique (The concepts of tranquility and the important role of the body in cultivation will be discussed in chapters four, five, and six). I was in a peculiar situation: My mind said this *qigong* stuff was nonsense, and my body said there was something very good about it. Now I would say, in retrospective interpretation, that the situation demonstrated the usual separation between intellect and body that was the norm in our culture to which I was inducted. I would also say, in hindsight, that my previous study of Asian philosophy had no depth. It was not fully embodied.

### **Discovering that Emotions, Intentions and Values Matter**

Given my upbringing and my desire for scientific explanation, I was consumed to understand rationally and scientifically the practice and philosophy that enabled my experiences of the first encounter with *qigong* and subsequent progress that I made. I also learned through experience and reading (Cohen, 1997; Hsu, 1999) that *qigong* practice enabled intuitive experiences so this was of great interest to me. I prepared a paper examining the intersection between Daoist contemplative practice and science. I discovered that Kuhn (1970) provided the intersection I was looking for with his insight that paradigm



shifts are brought on as a consequence of scientists' intuitive insights. Kuhn wrote that "no ordinary sense of the term interpretation or logic fits these flashes of intuition through which a new paradigm is born" (1970, p. 123). It is important to note that Kuhn also held that rational thinking was a critical and important part of scientific endeavour—a position he later defended against those who accused him of being a relativist (Kuhn, 1977). Kuhn is not alone in the view that both rational and intuitive processes are important. Einstein too observed that "The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift" (as cited in McMillan, 2004, p. 160), thus giving intuition a prominent place alongside reason. The valuing of both reason and intuition or emotion is a theme that the reader will encounter throughout this thesis. My encounter of a balanced view of the roles of reason and intuition in science put me on a path of reconciliation and integration. Science can lead paradigm shifts, and can serve to validate a new paradigm. Ideally, science is foremost about openness in inquiry and pursuing truth, however strange and uncomfortable. This integrative approach is reflected in chapters three and seven, in which leading neuroscience and psychological findings are considered in terms of the role of emotions and values in ethics. The findings of recent neuroscience and psychological research are introduced in my thesis as a means of justifying a view of ethics that integrates reason and

emotions, intellect, body, facts, and values. Chapter seven however, observes that the bias to the rational noted by Einstein continues to influence ethics pedagogy despite the evidence that unconscious intuitive and rational conscious deliberative processes both make important contributions to moral functioning. It appears that it is insufficient to intellectually know that the unconscious is important; rather, one must experience it. Chapter eight provides a detailed description of ethics pedagogy that directly addresses emotions and the unconscious.

My interest in intuition led me to research done at Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR). My encounter with PEAR changed my views on the role of human emotions, intentions, values, and human conduct. The PEAR group (Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research, 1999) conducted research over a 20-year period, and demonstrated that anyone, without any training, can and does have remote perception abilities and the ability to influence the output of random number generators at a distance with their thoughts (Jahn & Dunne, 1997). The former is a process of sending information out while the latter is a process of receiving information from external sources, which might be called a form of intuition. This research demonstrates interconnectedness between people and people, and people and objects (Jahn & Dunne, 1997). Based on these experiments it was concluded that “human consciousness can extract information from physical

aspects of its environment, through an unknown process that is independent of space and time” (Jahn & Dunne, 1997, pp. 211-212), and that “operator consciousness is capable of inserting information, in its most rudimentary objective form, namely binary bits, into these random physical systems, by some anomalous means that is independent of space and time” (Jahn & Dunne, 1997, p. 210-211). Jahn and Dunne (1997) observed that human intentions, positive human emotions, and subjective resonance with the object are helpful in the intuitive process.

It was a revelation to me that credible engineers were writing and talking about the science of the subjective (Jahn & Dunne 1997) and about the importance of subjective experiences like intention, play, resonance, and emotions. Despite controversy about these findings,<sup>1</sup> it enabled me to consider subjective human values and moral agency as important. It was not just the scientific findings that caught my attention; I was also struck by credible accounts of intuition in action in health care (Schulz, 1998) and management (Fields, 2001). Given these understandings and my own experience with intuition in the work place, I was motivated to write and publish a paper on the leader’s role in cultivating intuition in the workplace (Culham, 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> The research completed by PEAR is controversial. Sceptics hold that the effects measured by PEAR are small and may be due to other causes. In addition, the results have not been rigorously repeated (Jeffers, 2007). Sympathetic observers acknowledge there are difficulties in the results however, a hostile science community with a closed attitude to the premise of the work are obstacles to fully exploring the phenomenon (Walach & Jonas, 2007).

## Why Study Ethics and Learn Virtue?

Several years after I began *qigong* I came to understand that, in order to advance in my *qigong* practice, I needed to practice virtue. Perhaps I had been told this before but I did not absorb it. When I first heard this advice I wondered what does 'virtue' have to do with deepening one's *qigong* practice? It made no sense to me. And besides, 'virtue' sounded so antiquated and quaint. It is true that Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism all speak of the need to cultivate virtue, so the recommendation that I practice virtue should not have been a revelation. At the time though, I thought this was a strange concept. I thought that improving my practice might have something to do with my posture, breathing, or some other physical or physiological aspect of the practice. I did not see the connection between body and morality. How could virtue influence what I felt physically or emotionally while I sat practicing? Here again my thinking and worldview came up against an entirely different view.

My turn towards the study of ethics took more than the psychological dissonance described above. In October of 2003, I participated in a leadership course paid for by my company. Part of it involved taking a personality test. At the end of the course, I sat down with a coach who told me that my results indicated that I was more suited to being a minister or someone in the helping professions such as education or counselling than being an engineer. I have never had a

desire to be a priest or minister, although I felt that engineering was not a perfect match for me despite the fact that I had an interesting and rewarding career. Over the years, I had received advice and observations from people. This had influenced me in varying degrees, but for some reason this particular advice came as an epiphany for me. It just seemed to be right. It felt like a coming-out. While the leadership course appeared to surface this knowledge about me, looking back, this awareness may also have been enabled by my *qigong* practice. Chapter six addresses the application of Daoist practice to leadership, and proposes that contemplation assists one to gain knowledge of one's authentic self.

Coincidence yet again played her hand in my life. By the end of 2004, Weldwood, my employer, was sold, and I was laid off early in 2005. So, at the age of 53, I was faced with the question of what to do with the rest of my life. A number of opportunities came to me to continue as a senior business leader in the resource sector, but out of a need for a shift in direction and the feeling that I should be in a helping profession, I accepted an opportunity to work as an educator in the faculty of business for City University of Seattle. My head supervisor, Dr. Henley, encouraged me to enrol in a PhD program at Simon Fraser University. So, there I was, a PhD student in Education. My initial research intention was to study intuition and how to educate people to

cultivate intuition. Again, I was steered away from my initial intention: from studying intuition to studying virtue.

At one point Dr. Blenkinsop, one of my professors, who was unfamiliar with *qigong*, challenged me to write a paper on virtue. I was both taken aback by and resistant to this suggestion. Yes, there was emphasis in *qigong* practice on virtue, but I still could not see its relevance to what I was doing in my research. Besides, who was I to wade into something that has been addressed so thoroughly throughout the ages? I also did not consider myself a person who practised virtue. The event that turned over my reservation and resistance was a reading of chapter 38 of Henricks' (1989) translation of the *Daodejing*, the Daoist classic text. I am sure I had read this chapter before, but it was the first time I paid attention to the statement contained in Chapter 38 where the theme is virtue. It states: the wise person "Dwells in the thick and doesn't dwell in the thin; Dwells in the fruit and doesn't dwell in the flower" (Henricks, 1989, p. 7). To me, this seemingly esoteric statement took on a significance it did not have before. The thick and the fruit refer to the root, associated with the *dao* and virtue. I should be studying virtue, not intuition. I began studying concepts of virtue and chapter two represents a culmination of effort in this area and was a launch into the thesis itself.

In the fall of 2008, I was fortunate enough to begin teaching as a sessional instructor at the UBC Sauder School of Business. I

commenced by teaching operations management—my career expertise—and then progressed into teaching ethics, the focus of this thesis. This gave me the opportunity to teach virtue ethics and incorporate pedagogy applying emotional intelligence and contemplative practice. Chapter eight provides details of the syllabus and goes into some of my experiences teaching values and ethics at the UBC Sauder School of Business. The foregoing was an account of my personal experiences that contributed to my arrival at the point of writing a thesis on ethics education.

## **An Overview of the Thesis**

How do we become ethical human beings? A short answer, based on my research so far, is 'by becoming whole human beings.' Finely attuned integration of mind, body, heart, and spirit is the answer. This answer has also shaped the character of this research and thesis construction. This integrative and interdisciplinary study draws from a modern form of virtue ethics, Daoist practice, psychology, and neuroscience to inform ethics pedagogy in the context of business education. I am interested in Daoist philosophy and practice as an educational means to help students to become ethical and flourish in their personal and professional lives. Hence, this thesis is oriented towards contributing in a practical way to the advancement of teaching ethics in a business school setting, and some of the concepts developed are currently being applied in business school ethics classes.

To put my approach to the research for this thesis into perspective, I shall refer to the work of Boyer (1991) who holds that there are several categories of research including discovery, integration, application, and teaching. The scholarship of discovery—the uncovering of new facts—is most closely associated with original research. Integrative scholarship refers to the effort of interpreting, drawing together, and bringing new insight to bear on original research (Boyer, 1991). Application scholarship evaluates how knowledge can be responsibly applied to problems, and teaching scholarship is the exercise of shaping knowledge and learning from teaching to facilitate effective learning (Boyer, 1991). The focus of this work is on the scholarship of integrating disparate sources of knowledge and extends this knowledge into the application of teaching.

## **Thesis Style and Content**

This thesis is in the style of a manuscript thesis whereby each chapter is intended to be publishable as a journal article or as a book chapter.

Chapter one provides the context and framework of the thesis. Chapter two is in press with the *Journal of Thought*. Chapter 3 is in the process of preparation for submission to a journal. An earlier version of chapters four and five received the Paul Tai Yip Ng award, managed by the David Lam Center of SFU, for best SFU graduate paper of 2010. It was also presented at the 2010 AERA annual conference, and is available in the



conference online proceedings (Culham, 2010). These chapters are being prepared for submission to a journal.

To facilitate the connectivity and flow of these discrete chapters, I have inserted at the beginning of each chapter a short commentary, and following each of the chapters, a section that provides a personal perspective through a narrative exemplification. The reader will note a style contrast between the objective style of the main chapters and accompanying short narratives.

Now I would like to provide a map of the chapters to come, and attach to these chapters a chronology of some significant developments in my thinking and changing worldviews. Chapter two introduces virtue ethics as articulated by MacIntyre (1984), considers whether emotional intelligence is a form of virtue ethics, and furthermore, investigates whether contemplative practices can contribute to the framework of virtue ethics. An early version of this paper was presented at the CSSE (2009), and a paper of the same title jointly written has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Thought* (Culham & Bai, 2011).

Chapter three was inspired by my work at UBC where I have been teaching at the Sauder School of business since the fall of 2008. In the fall of 2009, I was requested to incorporate the emotional intelligence components of my studies into operations management classes to encourage teamwork and people relation skills in students. At about this time, I began drafting the paper “Ethics Education of Business Leaders”

and presented an early version to the faculty and graduates students of the UBC Sauder School of Business Organizational Behaviour and Human Resources Division in November of 2009. This paper considers the debate, difficulties, and reluctance to teach and learn ethics in business schools. It then considers these difficulties in light of the culture of business schools and neuroscience findings, and proposes that a modified emotional intelligence could be taught in business schools as a foundation of ethics justified by philosophical, scientific, and practical reasons. The presentation led to an invite to teach an undergrad class in the fall of 2010 where virtue ethics, emotional intelligence, contemplation, and corporate values were explored and developed. Meanwhile, I continued to incorporate components of emotional intelligence and contemplative exercises in undergraduate and MBA operations logistics courses.

Chapters four, five, and six consider how ancient Daoist contemplative practices might inform contemporary business ethics education. Chapter four provides the rationale for the inquiry, a philosophical framework and context for the concepts and texts considered in chapters five and six. In the spring of 2010, I audited a Daoist class at Simon Fraser University taught by Dr. Crowe, and wrote for this course an earlier version of chapters four and five. The paper focuses on the *Neiye* (Inner Training), a proto Daoist work recorded about 2300–2400 years ago on the process of cultivating virtue (Roth,

1999). Chapter six considers the *Huainanzi*, a text of eclectic influences weighted to Daoist thinking that was compiled about 2100–2200 years ago and had as its purpose the preparation of individuals to be leaders (Major, Queen, Meyer, Roth, H.D. et al., 2010). Both works emphasize the body, mind, and spirit integration of humans in the development of virtue. The focus here again was to consider ethical development from the Daoist perspective to obtain potential insights into ethics education applicable in a business setting.

Chapter seven takes neuroscience as a point of reference, and examines how contemplative practices might contribute to emotional regulation: an aspect of moral psychology that appears to be pivotal. A more speculative portion of the paper considers how contemplative practices might contribute to high moral functioning through the lens of the nascent field of positive psychology. The concluding chapter provides information on the syllabus and experience in delivering a values and ethics course at the UBC Sauder School of Business that incorporates emotional intelligence and contemplative practices. The chapter concludes with recommendations for business leader ethics pedagogy, considers shortcomings of the thesis, and suggests further research.

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## CHAPTER 2: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE MEETS VIRTUE ETHICS: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATORS<sup>2</sup>

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### Preamble

The notion that there is more than one kind of intelligence for human beings, and that social and emotional intelligence (EI) is just as critical as cognitive intelligence for success in the world is by now fairly well received and well-established in North American educational contexts. The main proponents of social and EI are Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) who are noted for advancing the notion that social and emotional intelligence is important for effective leadership in any organizations, including teacher education and teaching in schools. Convinced that this notion is applicable to all educational contexts, Goleman, and Growald, founded the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) in 1994 with the vision & mission “to establish social and emotional learning as an essential part of education” (CASEL, 2012, para. 3).<sup>3</sup> His work has been enormously influential in various

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<sup>2</sup> Accepted for publication by the journal Thought.

<sup>3</sup> CASEL gathers scientific evidence to demonstrate the contributions of social and emotional learning to students’ academic and social success and provides practitioners and school administrators with the resources to improve and expand social emotional learning. For example, recent research sponsored by CASEL examined the impact of social emotional learning (SEL) programs on K-8 students in the US. This work examined 317 studies involving 324,303 students and observed improvement in student’s social-emotional skills, attitudes about self and others, connection to school, positive social behaviour, and academic performance (Payton, Weissberg, Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Schellinger, Pachan, 2008). CASEL argues that teachers’ social and emotional competence (SEC) contributes to creating a climate conducive to learning and promotes positive development outcomes among students and proposes that programs be created to develop teachers’ SEC (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

education and leadership contexts, ranging from business leadership education to classroom management. But the more we—the authors of this paper—are impressed by the magnitude of salutary influence that Goleman et al.'s (2002) EI work spreads in diverse educational domains, the more we see its limitations as an educational project that can actually and practically augment people's EI and ethics.

We have chosen to consider EI in this chapter not only because of its far-reaching influence in the field of education, but also because of the claim that it was inspired by Aristotle's virtue ethics (Goleman, 1995) and its association with ethical development.<sup>4</sup> Our research and practice interest has been fostering ethical development in people via virtue ethics, and if EI is, as Goleman et al. (2002) claimed, such a singularly important ingredient, we would like to investigate Goleman et al.'s (2002) conceptualization of EI and consider the possibility of further developing and fortifying it. Given the acceptance of EI, its claimed value and roots in virtue ethics has prompted us to research the limitations of Goleman et al.'s (2002) EI work, and to search for works that would

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<sup>4</sup> Cohen (2006) Director of CASEL, draws a close association between SEL and ethical development



mitigate these imitations.<sup>5</sup> Goleman et al.'s (2002) EI project has attracted a healthy debate regarding its philosophic and practical foundations<sup>6</sup>. This discussion suggests that there is empirical evidence that EI has a positive impact on students' behaviour, however, we believe instructive philosophical concerns remain. We are particularly concerned about the educator's EI impacting student's learning and emotional intelligence, a concern also identified by Jennings and Greenberg (2009). Our paper advances the thesis that the cultivation of the educator's EI requires the practice of virtue ethics. We establish this thesis by first examining the limitations of Goleman et al.'s (2002) conceptualization of EI, and then by showing how these limitations can be

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<sup>5</sup> One of the ethical frameworks that we have considered for our project of fortifying Goleman's (2002) EI theory with an ethical theory is ethics of care as developed by Noddings (Noddings, 2002; Noddings, 2006; Noddings, 2006; Noddings, 2010)), a prominent theorist and proponent of ethics of care (from here on, EC). Our pragmatic decision, however, is not to utilize this theory, despite the fact that ethics of care has some similarities to EI. For example, EC does accord priority to emotion over reason, and also emphasizes the relational aspect of learning to be moral. However, we found that MacIntyre's (1984) Aristotelian based virtue ethics to be far more congruent with EI, and, as this paper will show, to have the right features that we are looking for with which to modify and augment EI. These features mostly have to do with rigorous and even painstaking cultivation of individual moral agency that virtue ethics articulates. EC, in contrast, is not focused on such cultivation as it sees care as innate and emergent from human sociality, and just needs to be extended appropriately for it to be a moral force. Not incidentally, Noddings denies that care is a virtue (Halwani, 2003). Virtue ethics, however, relies on individuals striving for their personal ideal and an understanding of the nature of consciousness. These differences inform a different emphasis and approach to moral education—a topic eminently worth exploring but not within this paper with its particular objective.

<sup>6</sup> “From a moral perspective, EI lacks moral depth and does not exclude the possibility that a calculated Machiavellian personality can be deemed emotionally intelligent. From an educational perspective, the paucity of solid empirical research on the efficiency of SEL programs adds further doubts to the psychological and moral ones about the viability of EI training in the classroom” (Kristjánsson, 2006, p.55). The validity of the construct was further criticized by Waterhouse who supports Kristjánsson's observations regarding its inadequacies in promoting moral development. Waterhouse (2006) further states that “emotional intelligence theories have inadequate empirical support and are not consistent with cognitive neuroscience findings” and should not be applied in education (p.247). In response empirical research is cited to refute the neuroscience and moral criticisms (Cherniss, Extein, Goleman, & Weissberg, 2006). However, we believe that philosophic concerns regarding the lack of moral depth of EI were not specifically or adequately addressed in this paper.

addressed by MacIntyre's (1984, 1988) virtue ethics which is a contemporary version of Aristotelian ethics. In the process, we also address what we see as MacIntyre's (1984, 1988) theoretical limitations that are in the way of extending virtue ethics to become the cornerstone of school teaching and learning. We also bring in Vokey's (2001) work to support our thesis. We present our work on the marriage of EI and virtue ethics as a challenge to the conventional and hegemonic conception and practice of education that marginalizes the education of the heart.<sup>7</sup>

### **Educators' Emotions are No Private Matter**

Goleman et al. (2002) held that the leader acts as the group's emotional guide and "has maximal power to sway everyone's emotions" (Goleman et al., 2002, p. 5). The emotions of the leader are important because, for example, if people's emotions are pushed toward enthusiasm, performance can soar. He refers to this effect as *resonance*. That is, those under the influence and guidance of the leader/educator come into emotional resonance with her or him: "Whether an organization fails or flourishes depends to a remarkable extent on the leaders' effectiveness in this primal emotional dimension" (Goleman et al., 2002, p. 5). To elaborate, a learning organization's performance depends on whether the

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<sup>7</sup> Feminists have been rightly pointing out that the classic western philosophical traditions' separation of intellect and emotion, and devaluation of the latter, is concomitant with devaluation of the female gender (Martin 1981; Noddings 2002). We the authors of this paper agree. We also agree that there may be manifest gender differences (whether socially constructed or biologically based) in terms of all manners of social practices, including how we participate in the world and care for things and beings. Ethics of care centralizes gender difference, and is committed to honouring the feminine way of being moral—caring. Coming from our Asian philosophical perspective, however, we do not see care as a gendered capacity. Nor do we see the feminine as essentially belonging to females. 'Feminine' and 'masculine' are archetypal psychological principles that both males and females embody and need to work with in cultivating moral agency.

emotional mood is positive or negative, and this is established by the leader whose emotions are contagious. As this is a crucial point in Goleman et al.'s (2002) thinking, we wish to elaborate on it and draw out implications for the cultivation of EI. Goleman et al. (2002) held that emotions spread whenever people are near one another, even when the contact is nonverbal. A number of empirical studies support this thesis. For example, Friedman stated: “[W]hen three strangers sit facing each other in silence for a minute or two, the one who is most emotionally expressive transmits his or her mood to the other two—without speaking a single word” (as cited in Goleman et al., 2002, p. 7). To elaborate, the following has been observed:

People seem to be capable of mimicking other people's facial, vocal, and postural expressions with stunning rapidity. As a consequence, they are able to feel themselves into other emotional lives to a surprising extent . . . Awareness of the existence of emotional contagion may prove useful in understanding and perhaps advancing various areas of interpersonal communication between . . . teachers and students. (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993, p. 99)

There is substantial evidence that people mimic speech, facial expressions, mannerisms, moods, and emotions of others (Chartrand, Maddux & Lakin, 2005). As well, recent studies of the brain show that the limbic system, which determines our emotional response, is an open system that relies on external sources to regulate itself. That would explain why people rely on emotional connections to other people for emotional stability (Goleman et al., 2002).

According to Rosengren et al. (as cited in Goleman et al., 2002), “three or more incidents of intense stress within a year triple the death rate in socially isolated middle aged men, whereas this experience has no impact on the death rate of men who cultivate many close relationships” (p. 7). Lewis et al. (as cited in Goleman et al., 2002) suggested that the limbic system is open to signals transmitted by others in a way that can alter hormone levels, cardiovascular function, sleep rhythms, and immune functions of others. Friedman and Riggio (as cited in Goleman et al., 2002) observed that heart rates and other physiological responses of two people synchronize after a 15-minute conversation. This synchronization of moods can occur even when there is no conversation. Goleman et al. stated: “[P]eople in groups inevitably catch feelings from one another, sharing everything from jealousy to envy to angst or euphoria” (2002, p.7). According to Kelly and Barsade (as cited in Goleman et al., 2002), “the more cohesive the group, the stronger the sharing of mood” (p. 7). Furthermore, research has demonstrated that the leader’s moods are contagious, that is, they are transferred to subordinates in self-managing groups, and influence group processes that are critical to group effectiveness (Sy, Côté, & Saavedra, 2005). These findings have a major implication for the education of leaders in any arena of educational leadership capacities—including schoolteachers.

Given that the leader’s personal and private emotions are contagious, Goleman et al. (2002) drew a profound conclusion: how a leader feels is not a private matter, it has public consequences. Therefore, “the most meaningful act

of responsibility that leaders can do is to regulate their own state of mind” (Goleman et al., 2002, p. 47) and “effective leadership demands the capacity for managing one’s own turbulent feelings while allowing the full expression of positive emotions” (Goleman et al., 2002, p. 48). For many students, negative emotions impede learning while positive emotions (referring to individual experiences) support learning (Schutz & Perkrun, 2007). Goleman et al. suggested that the leader’s (in our context, educator’s) private emotions have a significant impact on the emotional experience of those who work with her or him, and hence on learning outcomes. This suggests that leaders have the responsibility for developing their own EI, given that their emotional well-being and competency affect people’s learning and growth. Now we come back to the crucial question: how do we increase emotional intelligence? What is the process of education for this? As we shall show, Goleman et al.’s understanding of how to educate people for EI has some fundamental limitations. Unless we address this, we cannot move forward in any serious way with our goal of educating individuals for emotional intelligence.

### **Limitations of Goleman et al.’s EI as an Educational Project**

In Goleman et al. (2002) conception, EI is an individualistic trait. It is not predicated on principles espoused in MacIntyre’s (1984) virtue ethics, which holds that the emotions of individuals must be cultivated in the context of a communal or institutional practice that values internal goods, such as justice, courage, and honesty. While Goleman et al. (2002) saw the communal implication of the individual leaders’ emotional states; this did not affect the

conceptualization of the cultivation of EI as an individual rather than a relational or communal matter.

Let us further explicate and elaborate what we are saying here. When a human quality is taken as an individual trait, we tend to see it as something that the individual possesses, like intelligence or beauty. Having reified such quality as an individual attribute, we proceed to increase it by targeting it with enhancing techniques and resources such as how-to instructions, supplements, tools, exercises, and enrichments. The same seems to be happening with EI.

Our point is that it is a mistake to reify human qualities, including EI, and treat them as individual traits. Human qualities in individuals are invariably and inextricably involved in and constructed out of long-term socialization and acculturation contexts and processes that individuals participate (Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte & Cain, 1998). What this means in terms of education of these qualities is that we need to talk about communal and institutional practices that guide and shape the individuals who participate in them. This understanding is missing in the work of Goleman et al. (2002), and therein lie the limitations and weaknesses of his work on EI. We are interested in exploring the communal and institutional practices that foster and cultivate EI. To us, what such cultivation amounts to is essentially none other than what has been traditionally known as virtue ethics. Our next step, then, is to investigate virtue ethics to see how it will help with the cultivation of EI.

## MacIntyre's Virtue Ethics

We will now sketch out MacIntyre's (1984) virtue ethics and how it may apply to our society, and compare this virtue ethics to Goleman et al.'s (2002) proposals for the development of social and emotional intelligence. First, a little background discussion of MacIntyre's (1984) ethics: This will help us see the matter of EI as an ethical task. MacIntyre (1984) argued that ethics is a science that rests on a threefold scheme that assumes a contrast between a) human nature as it is, and b) human nature as it could be if it realized its purpose or *telos*. The third element is c) the human effort to move from the former to the latter, which constitutes ethics. To be an ethical being is to make this effort in the face of continual human failure to fulfill *telos*. What helps and furthers this effort is virtue: the human agency to regulate and discipline passions, and organize and direct will towards one's *telos*.

A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods. (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 191)

It is through the exercise of virtues that "our desires and emotions are to be put into order," which enables one to move from the former state to the latter, and realize "our true nature and to reach our true end" (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 52). To acquire the virtues requires one to cultivate a certain asceticism wherein one is aware of one's initial appetites, passions, and emotions, and yet is able to hold them in abeyance for the purpose of fulfilling one's *telos* (MacIntyre, 1999).

So far, we have articulated MacIntyre's (1984) three-fold schema regarding the individual's development of virtue ethics. That is, the inquiry concerning: 1) who I am now; 2) what I could be; 3) and the practice of ethics to move me from where I am today towards my ideal. MacIntyre (1984) held that this process occurs within the context of practices and within a tradition. For example, a woman who is a Buddhist, a doctor, and a mother is involved in the tradition of Buddhism and two practices: medicine and motherhood. Tradition provides a context for her ethics across those practices, and provides her with an overarching sense of the good that helps her make decisions about the priority of practices. For example, ideally, her tradition will inform her which practice should take priority with respect to the amount of time she should dedicate to motherhood versus medicine. Each of the practices also provides a context, history, and standards of excellence within which she will operate. Her values and ethic are expressed in her daily work with people. Does she have compassion? Is she trustworthy? Does she have courage? Does she follow the codified ethics of her practice? And finally, does she contribute and support her family? In this brief description, which will be elaborated later, it can be seen that context, community, and tradition are critical elements providing a framework for the development and practice of the virtues.

Now, note the similarity between Goleman et al.'s (2002) EI conception in four dimensions (self-awareness, etc.) and MacIntyre's (1984) virtue ethics. Where the two depart is the emphasis Goleman et al. placed on the work of the individual who develops largely due to his or her own effort with the support of



and in the context of a few trusted colleagues (2002). Goleman et al. do not address the context within which this development takes place to any significant extent. MacIntyre (1984), on the other hand, held that tradition, and the context within which one contributes to society that he refers to as practices, are particularly important in defining and supporting the development of virtues. MacIntyre (1984) argued that western philosophical thought has attempted to replace *telos* that had been first derived from the Greek concept of the good and later from Christian, Judaic, and Muslim theology, with reason and utility—both of which failed to adequately replace *telos*. With respect to reason, MacIntyre (1984) felt that it cannot provide a “genuine comprehension of man’s true end” (p. 54) because questions of ends can only be determined through values, which are subjective—not based on reason. MacIntyre (1984) presents Weber’s views on replacing *telos* with reason: “Questions of ends are questions of values, and on values reason is silent; conflict between rival values cannot be rationally settled. Instead one must simply choose—between parties, classes, nations causes, ideals” (p. 26). Further, “(A)ll faiths and all evaluations are equally non-rational; all are subjective direction given to sentiment and feeling” (1984, p. 26)<sup>8</sup>. Reason does not have the power to “correct our passions”, and therefore it fails at being a *telos* (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 54). With respect to utility, it fails as it simply cannot account for the beliefs in statements of moral truths that are founded in subjectivity (MacIntyre, 1984). For example, when something is a moral principle that we must abide by, lack of utility with respect to enacting the

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<sup>8</sup> MacIntyre (1984) sums this up by stating: “Reason is calculative; it can assess truths of fact and mathematical relations but nothing more. In the realm of practice therefore it can speak only of means. About ends it must be silent” (p. 54).

principle does not constitute a case of good moral judgment. If something is a moral principle (that supports a *telos*), then one must enact it regardless of reason and utility may interfere with upholding the principle. In Goleman et al.'s (2002) conception of EI, there is an equivalent to *telos* in his assertion that knowing one's ideal self is an important step in the process of developing emotional intelligence. In the next section, we will take a closer look at how *telos* works in virtue ethics and by extension, in the cultivation of EI.

### ***Telos* and Unity of Life**

An important feature of the ethical life, according to MacIntyre (1984), is that virtues are cultivated within the narrative unity of a person's life. This is in contrast to ethics in modernity that partitions each human life into work, leisure, private life, and public life—each of which has its own norms and modes of behaviour (MacIntyre, 1984). MacIntyre stated: “[T]he unity of a virtue in someone's life is intelligible only as a characteristic of a unitary life, a life that can be conceived and evaluated as a whole” (p, 205). To the question ‘What might the unity of an individual life consist of?’ He responded: “Its unity is the unity of a narrative embodied in a single life. To ask ‘What is good for me?’ is to ask how best might I live out that unity and bring it to completion” (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 218). The response and direction to this arises out of the development and understanding of a *telos* for a human life that “transcends the limited goods of practices by constituting the good of a whole human life” (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 203). Further, this *telos* is reinforced by the virtue of integrity or constancy that provides a singleness of purpose throughout one's life. This then gives some

further understanding of the sense of *telos* that was identified earlier as a crucial component of the science of ethics.

What do we have in Goleman et al.'s (2002) EI that is equivalent or similar to MacIntyre's (1984) concept of *telos* and unity of life? The closest thing that we can come up with in reviewing Goleman et al.'s (2002) work is the notion of ideal self. Let us see how this is articulated. Goleman et al. said that the key to leadership is emotional resonance, which is value driven, flexible, open and honest, and connected to people and networks (2002). Elaborating on 'emotional resonance', McKee, Boyatzis and Johnston (2008) stated:

Resonant leaders are attuned to themselves and to the needs, desires and dreams of the people they lead. They are energized by the changing environment and create conditions in which people can be their best. Such leaders seek a meaningful future for their people, organizations, and communities. They are flexible, responsive, and able to establish and maintain powerful and positive relationships. (p. 2).

The foundation of emotional resonance is self-awareness, for which Goleman et al. (2002) propose an approach. In addressing the question of how one becomes a more self-aware and resonant leader, self-directed learning is an essential principle. That is, the individual must take responsibility for intentionally developing themselves, which usually requires becoming aware of her or his emotional capacities and working to change negative behavioural habits built up over the decades. This is difficult work as negative habits are 'hard-wired' into the brain. Therefore, to begin and sustain development in emotional intelligence,

one must connect with one's ideal self, which implies paying close attention to dreams, values, goals, emotions, strengths, and limitations. When the connection is made, one feels passionate about the possibilities life holds, and this passion carries one through the difficulties inevitably faced in the process of change. Goleman et al. (2002) stated: "[C]onnecting with the ideal within requires deep introspection at the gut level to reveal the person you would like to be, including what you want in your life" (p. 115-116). Finding one's life purpose provides the individual with the motivation to withstand hardships on the way to reaching her or his ideal self. What Goleman et al. (2002) are saying about the ideal self and how we work with it appears similar to MacIntyre's (1984) observation that the cultivation of habits derived from virtue principles put in order desires and emotions, which in turn enables people to move towards their *telos*. As we mentioned earlier, for MacIntyre (1984), such cultivation of habits takes place within the context of practices and tradition. It is in the light of MacIntyre's (1984) articulation of these concepts that we gain an understanding of the shortcomings of Goleman et al.'s (2002) proposals; hence, we shall consider them in more detail.

### **Centrality of Practice and the Role of Tradition in Virtue Ethics**

One's *telos* or purpose may be expressed through the specifics of a practice and it is within a practice that one acts virtuously or otherwise. According to MacIntyre (1984), a practice is any "coherent and complex form of socially established and cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized" (1984, p. 186). He provides a wide range of

examples including football, chess, farming, architecture, physics, raising and sustaining a family, and other cooperative activities. Activities that are not practices are those that develop technical skills, such as learning how to throw a football, learning how to lay bricks, or practicing solving physics problems. These activities do not meet all the requirements of a practice.

Practices result in the achievement of goods within the context of a history, standards of excellence, and obedience to rules set by the practice. Any practitioner is constrained by these conditions (MacIntyre, 1984). According to MacIntyre (1984), goods arising from a practice can be internal and external. External goods are possessions such as power, wealth, and fame, which are achieved through competition wherein there must be winners and losers. Although internal goods may be the outcome of competition to excel, their achievement is a good for the community that participates in the practice. Virtues such as justice, courage, and honesty are goods that define our relationships to other people involved in the practice (MacIntyre, 1984).

We believe that leadership in an organization, the professions, or in life, whether sustaining a family, teaching, practicing medicine or law, or other such pursuits falls within MacIntyre's (1984) definition of a practice. In addition, it is our view that Goleman et al.'s (2002) conception of EI is equivalent to the development of internal goods because it deals with the relationships between people, and it is concerned with issues of values, trust, and authenticity (2002). However, it does not take into account the priority work environments place on

external goods: a concern articulated by MacIntyre (1984), as we shall see below.

MacIntyre (1984) held that practices and institutions support one another; however, the goods that sustain practices are internal (the virtues) and the goods that sustain institutions are external such as reputation, power, wealth, and so on. Therefore, those working within institutions are subjected to the corrupting influence of these same institutions (MacIntyre, 1984). MacIntyre and Dunne (2002) provided an example in educational institutions whereby activities are measured in terms of productivity (how many students graduated at what cost) instead of a concern, for example, for the cultural formation of the student. What will happen, for example, when individuals after beginning down the road of EI realize that their ideal selves and the internal goods they seek are not in alignment with the values and external goods sought by their employer? It is likely that these people will either leave their jobs or, alternatively, experience a loss of well-being and a sense of frustration in their jobs. Econometric research conducted by Helliwell (2005) in Europe and North America on social well-being in the workplace suggests that engagement with others in the workplace and community, work place trust, and meaningful work are very important to workers. We suggest that engagement and trust constitute aspects of goods internal to practice, and meaningful work suggests an alignment with an individual's values and ideal self. It is interesting that, in Helliwell's research, these categories ranked significantly higher in importance than increasing income above a

moderate level (Helliwell, 2005): a category clearly linked to goods external to practice.

Another very important concept that MacIntyre (1984) introduced is tradition, and we will examine how it squares with Goleman et al.'s (2002) understanding of EI. As we shall see, some tension arises. MacIntyre (1984) stated that a living tradition provides a historical and social context, an argument and framework for the good consistent within the tradition. The individual's search for his or her good is conducted within the context of that tradition, and both the individual and the tradition are sustained by the virtues of justice, truthfulness, courage, and intellectual virtues. Cultural traditions provide norms, priorities, and assumptions about what it means to be a person and the expectations concerning normal behaviour (Vokey, 2001). According to MacIntyre (1984):

The virtues therefore are to be understood as those dispositions which will not only sustain practices and enable us to achieve the goods internal to practices, but which will also sustain us in the relevant kind of quest for the good, by enabling us to overcome the harms, dangers, temptations and distractions which we encounter, and which will furnish us with increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good. (p. 219).

To this point, a number of parallels between Goleman et al.'s (2002) development of EI and MacIntyre's (1984) conception of virtue ethics have been identified; however, it is especially on the issue of tradition where a significant departure appears. MacIntyre (1988) holds that liberalism is a tradition founded

on concepts that are antithetical to the practice of virtue ethics. He holds that individualism and personal preference are fundamental to liberalism: therefore, there can be no overriding good except that of the principle of the individual and her or his preferences (MacIntyre, 1988). Virtue ethics views the individual as a member of a community, a citizen, who reasons and chooses within this context, whereas liberalism sees the individual as someone who reasons and makes choices within the context of the needs of the individual (MacIntyre, 1988). In addition, liberalism assumes that consumption (acquisitiveness) is a cornerstone of the market economy, which takes limitless economic growth, and not internal goods, as a fundamental good. Conversely, "Aristotelian norms would not only have to view acquisitiveness as a vice but would have to set strict limits to growth insofar as that is necessary to preserve or enhance a distribution of goods according to desert" (MacIntyre, 1988, p. 112).

For these reasons, MacIntyre (1988) argued that the tradition of liberalism is not consistent with the tradition of virtue ethics. In addition, he argued that liberalism, by its very nature, accepts a number of rival and incompatible definitions of the good and accounts of the virtues, and therefore there can be no shared program for moral education within public institutions which must accommodate multiple perspectives (MacIntyre, 1999).

With these observations we might conclude by saying that it is impossible to develop virtue ethics in a liberal public education institution, and that EI itself is not a form of virtue ethics as conceived by MacIntyre (1984). That is, if we take MacIntyre's views seriously, then we cannot make the case that his virtue ethics



could complement and supplement Goleman et al.'s (2002) EI project. Where does this situation leave us with our own project of fortifying Goleman et al.'s (2002) EI with MacIntyre's (1984, 1988) virtue ethics? At this point, we turn to Vokey (2001) for a critique of MacIntyre's (1984, 1988) position and a resolution to his concerns, which will give us a way to use the basic insight gained from MacIntyre about the relational and communal nature of the development of virtue to fortify the Goleman et al.'s (2002) EI proposal.

### **Reasons of the Heart and Intrinsic Value**

Vokey (2005) argued it is important that people learn to recognize what a truly virtuous person, who acts based on intrinsic moral values, would do in particular contexts. He held that MacIntyre's (1999; MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002) framework for moral education does not achieve this recognition because it relies solely on a discursive and intellectual approach whereas intrinsic value requires both an intellectual understanding *and* an embodied emotional understanding which are elaborated in a chapter of Vokey's thesis "Reasons of the Heart" (p. 257-309). Intrinsic value is defined as an event or object judged to be intrinsically good for its own sake as opposed to for the sake of human desires or interests (Vokey, 2005). Vokey held that people commonly rely on positive and negative aspects of their experiences to justify their judgments of intrinsic value. This cognitive-affective response is evident when people are "profoundly moved in positive ways by experiencing or witnessing freedom, solidarity and compassion; and profoundly moved in negative ways by experiencing or witnessing oppression, alienation, and indifference" (Vokey, 2005, p. 95). Moreover, Vokey suggested

that MacIntyre's (1984, 1988) moral philosophy is limited in that it emphasizes discursive, propositional knowledge at the expense of practical personal knowledge (Vokey, 2005) and in that it relies on moral theory grounded in a specific faith to justify why virtues should be intrinsically valued (Vokey, 2001). Consistent with this view, Vokey (2001) held that MacIntyre's (1984, 1988) philosophy has not considered the role of non-conceptual insight to determine intrinsic value; and with respect to *telos*, it has relegated the quality of human experience to a motivating role as opposed to a cognitional role. That is, MacIntyre's (1984) concept of *telos* is grounded in a tradition of faith (Vokey, 2001); therefore, one would only need to know the *telos* of one's faith that provides the motivation to pursue a virtuous path. In contrast, Vokey (2005) proposed that people commonly rely on human experience to determine intrinsic value. This capability to apprehend intrinsic value can be developed in the individual to provide the cognitive capability to apprehend one's *telos* and the intrinsic good. Our consideration of Goleman et al.'s (2002) concept of *telos* revealed an individually driven process for determining one's ideal self, which may or may not reference a particular faith. Goleman et al. (2002) recommended that individuals engage in a process of deep introspection at the gut level to reveal their personal ideal, which, in our view, coheres with Vokey's understanding of intrinsic value. Goleman et al. (2002) do not articulate clearly how this deep introspection can be done to reveal this ideal.

Vokey (2005) addressed the limitations in MacIntyre's (1984, 1988) proposals through reference to Mahayana Buddhist traditions, which may provide

some clarity to Goleman et al.'s (2002) process. Vokey (2005) proposed that moral education would benefit from an appeal to "reasons of the heart" (Vokey 2001, p. 257-309). This is achieved through contemplative practices, which he claimed create a state of mind that facilitates a personal direct awareness of intrinsic value (Vokey, 2005). According to this tradition, our usual awareness is dominated by concepts, discursive thought, and dualism where subject and object are perceived as separate. Contemplation provides individuals, regardless of their worldviews and traditions, with the ability to increase their perception of nondual and nondiscursive states of mind where they may become aware of intrinsic value (Vokey, 2005). To note, nondualistic experiences are not uncommon or esoteric. They are familiar experiences of musicians, dancers, athletes, and so on, where there is no separation between action and agent (Vokey, 2005). Those with a greater awareness of nonduality achieve a clearer perception and purer motivation because of their awareness of the unity of all phenomena (Vokey, 2005). In practical terms, contemplation enables a level of perception that provides a distance from our emotions and the immediacy of our dualistic experience, and yet retains the cognitive content of emotions to provide saliency in practical moral judgments (Vokey, 2005). All of this is not without empirical foundation. Research shows that contemplative practices support EI by increasing awareness of one's internal experience, promotion of reflection, self-regulation, and caring for others, and results in a mindset that is associated with effective classroom teaching and facilitation (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

In our view, the above observations do much to address MacIntyre's (1999; MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002) concern that virtue ethics cannot be taught in a public education setting since apprehension of intrinsic good through reasons of the heart is available to anyone, regardless of traditions and worldviews, and can be augmented through contemplative practices. In addition, they appear to provide a more structured approach to the EI concept of developing one's life purpose. Vokey's (2001) proposal may also help to shift the emphasis away from being solely motivated by one's purpose to a motivation generated by the intrinsic value of being virtuous. His proposal is based on an articulation of MacIntyre's (1984) concern regarding the modern manager (and by extension, educators) being an emotivist, and not being able to participate in the virtues she or he derives for the modern world. MacIntyre (1984) held that he or she operate in the mode of emotivism because their moral judgments are based on the non-rational, subjective attitudes and feelings of the individual. That is, there are no standards or criteria against which moral judgments are made (MacIntyre, 1984). He also held that emotivism removes the distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations: a valid and serious concern with respect to any application of Goleman et al.'s (2002) EI thesis. Influences that the leader's emotions have on others work just as ethically as unethically. On this matter, MacIntyre (1984) held that humans who are in relationships uninformed by morality treat the other as a means to his or her ends wherein the other is seen as an instrument. Those in power may apply whatever influences are necessary to achieve through that person. On the other hand, a person guided by morality

of intrinsic valuing treats the other as an end. For example, in a leader/subordinate relationship, the leader, rather than coercion or manipulation through his or her position of authority, might offer the subordinate good reasons for acting one way or another, and leave it to her or him to evaluate those reasons and act accordingly (MacIntyre, 1984). In this way, the values, opinions, and contribution of the subordinate are intrinsically valued.

We are indeed concerned that introducing Goleman et al.'s (2002) concept of EI to teaching may formalize emotivism, just as MacIntyre (1984) warned us about subjectivity and the lack of criterion. However, we believe that this can be addressed through reinforcing the understanding—as Goleman et al. (2002) noted—that a leader's, or educator's feelings are not private; they have public consequences. Awareness of this provides a criterion of transparency, authenticity, and honesty that can be called upon when we work with people to cultivate their ethics and emotional intelligence. To some extent, it imposes an internal-external measure on the educator to be honest with him or her self and with others. For example, if I as a teacher, am consistently disinterested in teaching or do not have the best interests of my students at heart, this internal state of mind will be felt by the students and my effectiveness as a teacher will be compromised. Ethical teaching then becomes not just a matter of technique but of state of mind of the teacher. Further, addressing MacIntyre's (1984) concerns, once individuals realize the nature of the open relationship they have with others, they are likely to see students and followers intrinsically rather than instrumentally and understand that they are making moral decisions. We believe

that the contemplative path advocated by Vokey (2001) will strengthen and support this important understanding. The resulting congruence of educators' values and the nature of their relationships with themselves and others cannot be hidden, and will constitute as the positive force in emotional contagion.

We believe that personal experience and knowledge of the need for intrinsic valuing of others is a foundation of ethics, but it does not replace the need for practice and an intellectual understanding of virtue ethics. We would need to impose on ourselves the ethical norms considered part of the tradition of virtue ethics such as compassion, courage, honesty, and wisdom and include an examination of our values and life purpose in light of these norms. In addition, given our plural society, we would want to develop a broad knowledge of other ethical systems such as deontology, utility ethics, and the ethics of dominant religions. We believe that adding the extra dimension of ethical considerations, based on MacIntyre's (1984, 1988) work, to Goleman et al.'s (2002) EI project would address MacIntyre's concern that leaders make moral decisions solely on subjective feelings and attitudes and are not subject to external criteria. Hence, the development of EI has the potential to be a moral practice. This could result in a significant shift in thinking. Yet, the present reality has not made this shift. MacIntyre (1984) is right in observing that, for much of the twentieth century, managers and educators viewed those under them instrumentally. He considered educators and managers to fall into a character category that exemplifies the fundamental values of an era (1984): for our era, it is instrumentalism. For example, a contemporary educator may typically be

concerned with the well-being of students only in as much as their grades and success provide a good reflection on him or her.

Based on our comparison of Goleman et al.'s (2002) conceptualization of EI to MacIntyre's (1984, 1988) virtue ethics, we offer three considerations that militate against implementing virtue ethics and EI in contemporary educational environments: 1) traditional management practices that are based on the assumption that employees are an instrument; 2) our culture that values external goods over internal goods; 3) and the institutions that can only seek external goods. In these environments, it is not difficult to imagine that the concept of EI itself will be instrumentally utilized as a means to achieve higher output, yet its underlying principle appears to lead in a broader direction whereby the well-being of those working in an institution are its primary concern, and the achievement of better performance is secondary. The difference between applying EI to obtain improved productivity over the objective of assisting employees achieve well-being has significant implications particularly in the context of a culture and organizations that are instrumentally driven. Perhaps this tension can be resolved through Goleman et al.'s (2002) observation that the self-management of EI "enables transparency, which is not only a virtue but also an organizational strength. Transparency—an authentic openness to others about one's feelings, beliefs, and actions—allows integrity, or the sense that one can be trusted" (Goleman et al., 2002, p. 47). This attribute relies on impulse control, and allows one to live his or her values. As well, it means one is comfortable with the questions transparency pose (Goleman et al., 2002). We also identified means

of augmenting and generalizing MacIntyre's (1984, 1988) virtue ethics by recommending the introduction of contemplative disciplines as a means of balancing the intellectual emphasis with reference to the quality of human experience.

## **Implications for Education**

At the beginning of this paper, we suggested that how a teacher feels is not a private matter: rather, it has public consequences that impact students' performance, and the learning environment might be shaped as much or more by resonance of the educator's feelings and emotions than their words and actions. Given this, we suggested that educators have a responsibility, as part of their training and lifelong learning, to develop their EI. Further, with the exception of concerns regarding the role of a tradition, we have argued that the development of EI should be a moral practice as defined by MacIntyre (1984). Thus, those developing their EI may be implicitly learning virtue ethics. With respect to education in the virtues, MacIntyre held that the fully virtuous person acts on the basis of knowledge of the good (Vokey, 2001) and that both intellectual virtues and virtues of character are required to become virtuous. Intellectual virtues are acquired through teaching and the virtues of character through habitual exercise (MacIntyre, 1984). MacIntyre (as cited in Vokey, 2001) held that these forms of moral education cannot be separated because "character building requires both the practice of virtuous acts and intellectual knowledge" (pp. 159–160). As we have seen earlier, MacIntyre (1984) held that virtue ethics is developed within the context of one's life purpose, and exercised over one's life and within the context



of a community and a tradition. In terms of developing one's EI, Goleman et al. (2002) held that it is developed within the context of one's life purpose, requires knowledge and practice, and is best conducted with the benefit of a positive supportive community that help people make positive changes, particularly if the relationships are filled with "candour, trust, and psychological safety" (p. 163). It is noteworthy that these communities appear to be formed outside the formal structure of the work place, perhaps because many work places do not provide the required sense of psychological safety and personal and existential engagement.

Both MacIntyre (1984) and Goleman et al. (2002) contemplated providing a context within which their respective concepts are to be developed. MacIntyre, (1984) however, proposed a much more rigorous context in the form of a philosophical argument and cultural tradition than Goleman et al. (2002) who proposed ad hoc support groups. We agree with MacIntyre (1984) that current cultural and institutional norms make the development of virtue ethics in our society difficult; however, we believe that this concern may be addressed through the provision of formal support for those developing EI and virtue ethics. Therefore, we recommend, for instance with respect to teacher education, virtue ethics to be explicitly incorporated with the concept of EI, and that teacher education as an institution should house a community dedicated to support those developing virtues, or goods internal to practices. This in turn will shape the relationships of students, teachers, and administrators. Based on the arguments presented in this chapter, we offer the following guidelines to learning

communities interested in implementing EI integrated with virtue ethics. Learning communities should:

- Clearly define their purpose consistent with virtue ethics;
- Be led by a leader with strong EI and exemplary ethics;
- Provide support for development of the participants life purpose;
- Provide training in contemplative practices and a space to practice;
- Include teaching of theory and practice of ethics;
- Include teaching the theory and practice of developing one's EI or one of its derivatives as part of its program; and
- Provide life-long support for teachers through programs as they encounter ethical and emotional issues in the workplace.

In sum, virtue ethics and EI appear to bear significant similarities. Given this, we argue that the project of cultivating EI will benefit from an explicit recognition that it is indeed virtue ethics. As an implication for teacher education, we propose the need for an appropriately structured community to support teachers in developing ethics and emotional competencies. We have provided broad recommendations on what this might look like, but much needs to be done to fill in the details.

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## **Opening the Doors of Inner Perception<sup>9</sup>**

In the summer of 2007, I was hired by Erehwon School of Business in Ontario as a sessional co-lecturer to provide emotional intelligence content in a business project management class. The other lecturer who had primary responsibility for the course delivered the project management content. My objective was to improve student teamwork—an important aspect of project management. My role was to give an introductory lecture and several supporting lectures throughout the term. This is an account of the first lecture. One of the first steps in developing emotional intelligence is to become aware of one's emotions. A component of my lecture included a contemplative breathing exercise intended to enhance students' awareness of their inner emotional state. In this account, I share both my experience and the student's perceptions of their inner experience.

This was the first occasion I introduced contemplation in a post secondary business environment and planned to openly discuss emotions and feelings, but I had no idea whether I could pull it off. I was a new sessional, and to be frank, I was nervous. To this point in my career, I had separated my personal interest in contemplation from my business life but I had been building a bridge in my own life from the scientific and rational to the emotional, so why not bring this into the business world? Contemplation is not usually practiced in business classes and by its very nature is a process of opening one's self up; a process of making

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<sup>9</sup> This story is a fiction. To create this story, I drew from my experience over several years of personally witnessing and participating in contemplative practices as well as trying to teaching my Business students to be more emotionally intelligent.

one's self vulnerable. My own experience told me that vulnerability is not valued and usually discouraged in business settings. The phrase dog eat dog sometimes associated with business doesn't match up with discussing how one feels.

I was concerned that there would be reluctance by the students to participate in such an exercise. I was concerned that business students would be wondering why they needed to learn about emotional intelligence and contemplation in this class. I was wondering if it was the right thing to do as a pedagogical technique. So, I was going in with a lot of doubts.

Upon walking into the first class I noticed that most of the students were early to mid career men who in my experience tend to be less open to discussing emotions so my concerns were heightened, but there was nothing to do but press on. Fortunately, the co-lecturer, a seasoned professor, gave me a good introduction.

I began by talking about my own business experience as a way of establishing my credibility. Then I presented information that higher levels of emotional intelligence are beneficial to students. I provided an explanation that knowing one's emotions helps one know emotions in others and assists one in working better with others. I stated that they would be doing a breathing exercise intended to help students become more aware of their inner emotional state through improved awareness of their body. Throughout this presentation, there was little in the way of reaction and no questions. I couldn't tell how this was being received.

In preparation for the breathing exercise, I asked the students to think of an emotional event in their lives over the past week that was positive or negative and discuss it with a partner. The purpose was to bring the experience fully into mind and body. I was pleased to see that the students readily paired off and began what appeared to be animated discussions with their partners. This was followed by instructions on how to do the breathing exercise, which essentially required them to stand up, close their eyes, and breathe normally. While doing the breathing exercise, I asked them to pay attention to what was felt in their bodies. I asked them to pay attention to any feeling and sense what might help them learn about themselves and their response to the experience.

After giving the instructions, I asked if there were any questions. No questions. There was very little reaction. I couldn't tell what they were thinking. I turned the lights off and began the exercise myself and most of the students appeared to follow my lead. Despite my sense of worry and concern, my mental state quickly became more tranquil as it usually does during contemplation. The real test of course would be the discussion that followed. Would there be dead air or would someone volunteer to speak about their experience? The breathing exercise was short; two to three minutes in length, and when it was over, I asked them to discuss again what they experienced with a partner. Again, an animated discussion ensued; a good sign I thought. Then I asked if anyone was prepared to discuss her or his experience with the class.

Immediately a student volunteered to speak. He said that he had chosen to recall a positive experience related to the celebration of his birthday. For the



first time he had been away from home on his birthday, and a few days before, his younger sister sent him happy birthday messages and pictures of their family. When he brought this positive experience to mind during the breathing exercise, he said that he had a sense of overall calm and lightness that gave him the sense of being lifted off the ground. As I listened to this student's story, I was struck by the similarity of his experience with my first experience of lightness and calm in contemplative practice. As the student was relating his experience, I felt a sense of exhilaration. The exercise had worked. Someone connected with the exercise! I saw this as a not so subtle indication that this approach connects emotionally with people.

Following the first account, another student offered that he had thought about both negative and positive emotional experiences during the contemplation. He noted that the negative emotions seem to cause his posture to slouch accompanied by a feeling of pressure on his shoulders and a tightening in his chest. The positive thoughts on the other hand, seemed to straighten his posture, unclench his eyebrows, and trigger a sensation that made him want to smile. A third student thought of positive emotions and asked whether the exercise could enable intuitive insights. I said that it was possible, could he elaborate on his experience? He said that he felt a focusing of all his thoughts and emotions together in his head and then the recollection of a childhood summer vacation slowly played his mind. This was accompanied by a sense of gratitude and contentment. He felt lighter and a sense of whole body balance. I asked him why this experience gave rise to his question. He said when he

began the exercise, the pleasant emotion he remembered had nothing to do with the recalled vacation. It was as if the recollections appeared without trying and it reminded him of other intuitive experiences he previously had. Following this, several other students related their experiences confirming that the exercise had connected.

I am always pleased and somewhat awed to hear such experiences from students that are also helpful to other students. I have found that when students share their meaningful experience, such as the ones described here, this supports others in the class to speak. As well, it helps those who choose not to speak because hearing a variety of responses from others may confirm fleeting but valuable emotional experiences that are usually ignored or forgotten.

Since the primary purpose of the initial exercise is to improve student's awareness of their emotions, I concluded the lecture with the following observations. You can learn about yourself by giving attention to both positive and negative emotions. Positive emotions tell you what you are attracted to and negative emotions tell you what you avoid. Sometimes you must face that which you avoid and sometimes it can be a warning. Knowing your own emotions helps you perceive emotions in others, helps you know your values better, and provides the emotional dimension and understanding of situations.

In considering the experiences recounted by students in this first class, in subsequent classes and in their reports, which often went more deeply into their physical and emotional experiences, I felt that the doors of perception to an inner world of had been opened.

## CHAPTER 3: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A COMPONENT OF BUSINESS ETHICS PEDAGOGY

### Preamble

In the wake of recent reports on ethical failings of business leaders, business busts and scandals, O'Toole and Bennis (2009) observed that, "we need a better way to evaluate business leaders" (p. 55). They proposed that corporate leadership should be measured according to "the extent to which executives create organizations that are economically, *ethically and socially sustainable*" (my emphasis) (pp. 54–55). While ethics and social sustainability have become part of a conversation in business, they are positioned second and third in O'Toole and Bennis' list, implying that profitability and the economy are the first priority while social and sustainable issues come second and third. The emphasis on returns and short-term gains may not be the only cause of business ethical failures as suggested by O'Toole and Bennis (2009). Business schools may be complicit in ethical failings of business leaders because they inculcate a narrow rationalist-instrumentalist mindset at the expense of social and ethical concerns (Fredrick, 2008), and, despite stated intentions, there is a lack of commitment to ethics education in post secondary business institutions (Swanson & Fisher, 2008).

What can business schools do to contribute to the development of leaders who create business and organizations that are ethically and socially sustainable? This chapter explores this question in two parts: the first is a brief

overview of the context in which business ethics education is delivered and the state of ethics education in business schools. This sets the stage for the second part, which provides, based on a rationale grounded in philosophy and neuroscience, a modified form of emotional intelligence as a component of ethics pedagogy.

## **Business Schools and Ethics**

Brady and Hart (2007) utilized a developmental model to gain insight into the moral maturity of commerce and business schools. The model is based on Kohlberg's theory of moral development, and was modified by Rest, Narvaez, Thomas, and Bebeau (1999). It divides moral development into three stages:

1. Personal interest where one's moral development involves the expectations, values, and duties related to one's self, family, and friends.
2. Maintaining norms where one extends moral issues beyond those in one's immediate circle to the wider society. This stage is marked by a lack of critical thinking and conformity to local conventions.
3. Post conventional and independent thinking where one adopts a personal moral code that draws on broader ideals and principles (Brady & Hart, 2007).

The culture and ethos of most organizations and business schools likely fall into the second stage of development where "some organizations are just not ready for advanced ethics" (Brady & Hart, 2007, p. 409). At this stage of development, one might interpret economic theory in a way that "suppresses the

perception of larger and more mature moral positions” (Brady & Hart, 2007, p. 410). For example, “all too often free market economics to the immature mind means take what you can get” (Brady & Hart, 2007, p.410).

A number of questions should be considered to assess whether business and business schools can indeed move to a higher level of moral maturity, including:

Does the culture of business suppress moral development?

Would a mature enterprise thrive or fail in a competitive environment?

Do successful enterprises exemplify morally mature cultures or not?

What can business schools do to promote greater moral maturity in the world of business? (Brady & Hart, 2007, p. 410)

These questions serve as a backdrop to the exploration of whether and how ethics can be taught in business schools—the debate about which has been underway for some time (Felton & Sims, 2005). The debate extends into the question of what should be taught in ethics classes.

Sims and Felton (2006) stated that there is no best answer to the question of ethics course content; however, they propose a comprehensive pedagogy by specifying the objectives, learning environment, learning processes, and roles of the participants in such a program. Brady and Hart (2007) suggest a thorough examination of business school’s entire curriculum to evaluate it from the perspective of moral developmental maturity. Frederick (2008) grappled with the shortcomings of business education from a different perspective, concluding the

failings are rooted in a rationalist mindset, which disengages schools and students from the natural processes of the world and management. He proposed a radical redesign of business education; one that instills moral and social responsible professional performance in students and in business (Frederick, 2008). While hopeful, he is not optimistic this approach will succeed, observing that despite wholesale and dramatic changes it will be difficult to “entirely deflect those darker, antisocial impulses that surface from time to time in corporate life” (Frederick, 2008, p. 40). While there appears to be agreement that something needs to be done to improve the pedagogy and commitment to ethics education in business schools, there are diverse views on how to go about it.

### **Business Student’s Attitude to Learning Ethics**

The ethical maturity and attitude of students also presents a challenge. When students arrive at university, they are at widely differing levels of moral growth and maturity (Brady & Hart, 2007). Starratt, (2009) who teaches education leaders ethics at the master's and doctoral levels, observes that

(I)n thirty years of teaching . . . I have found no more than a handful who could converse about ethically charged situations using formal ethical vocabulary beyond what they had learned from their parents or their church, synagogue, or mosque. (p. 3)

Despite the lack of knowledge of ethical vocabulary, I have observed that most students appear to make ethical decisions intuitively; based on their culture and upbringing. Most have not formally participated in a conversation about ethics,

nor have they engaged in a process of consciously connecting with the source of their values. When this does occur, students go through a process of confirming or re-evaluating their values in the context of their life goals and personal experiences.

The observations of Sims and Brinkmann, (2003) suggest that both business schools and students entering those schools are not enthusiastic about ethics education. Sims and Felton (2006) also noted that business educators and students question spending class time on ethics education. I will argue in the next section that the lack of effective ethics education in business schools and lack of enthusiasm in students for such an education is connected to a societal perspective on what it means to be moral.

## **Philosophical Concerns Regarding Ethics Pedagogy**

Ethics education of business leaders is vital for the well-being of individuals, companies, communities, and the planet, yet there are serious obstacles to progressing in this direction. These obstacles may be due to the fact that business education and practice is often based on philosophical foundations that are not conducive to moral conduct. According to Ghoshal (2005), the assumption that human beings are rational, self-interested, and egoistic creatures is at the core of much of the teaching and research at business schools. The assumption regarding the nature of human beings arises out of liberalism, which has become an ideology founded on “freedom as the ultimate goal and the individual as the ultimate entity in the society” where “a major aim is to leave the ethical problem for the individual to wrestle with” (Friedman, as cited

in Ghoshal 2005). Ghoshal proposed that business schools have adopted a scientific explanation of business where the role of human values and intentionality has been removed from consideration resulting in “ideologically inspired amoral theories . . . [which] have actively freed their students from any sense of moral responsibility” (Ghoshal, 2005, p. 76). Ghoshal argued for a more positive view of human being—a view that encompasses intentionality and altruistic behaviour as fundamental human characteristics (2005).

Ghoshal’s criticisms parallel those of MacIntyre (1984, 1988), an eminent ethics philosopher who critiqued liberalism’s emphasis on the primacy of the rational individual (1988) and its morals founded in notions of utility or reason (1984). A critical parallel relates to Ghoshal’s (2005) statement that business schools have increasingly relied on scientific explanations, freeing students from moral responsibility. MacIntyre argued that this trend is not limited to business schools, but part of a larger trend that has become imbedded in present day western societal values and morals (1984). This movement began and was justified by the enlightenment project dating to the 17th and 18th centuries, which expanded the role of science for the explanation of phenomena and reduced the role of a deity. It included the rejection of the concept of *telos* or purpose in favour of reason and utility as a basis for making moral decisions. *Telos*—the notion that one’s life, community, and society is intended to serve a purpose—was founded on the Greek concept of the “good,” which was later adopted as part of Christian, Judaic, and Islamic theology (MacIntyre, 1984). The replacement of *telos* with reason and utility was motivated by the emergence of



mechanistic science and justified as making logical sense, “given the rational and social nature of humans” (Taylor, p. 183).

MacIntyre (1984) however, argued that the enlightenment philosophers and those who followed failed in justifying this position. Reason cannot offer a true comprehension of man’s purpose (*telos*) because questions of ends can only be determined through values, which are determined subjectively, not through reason (MacIntyre, 1984). Explaining further, MacIntyre said: “questions of ends are questions of values, and on values reason is silent; conflict between rival values cannot be rationally settled. Instead one must simply choose— between parties, classes, nations causes, ideals” (p. 26), and, “[A]ll faiths and all evaluations are equally non-rational; all are subjective direction given to sentiment and feeling” (p. 26). With respect to reason, he held it cannot provide a genuine comprehension of man’s *telos* or true end and it has no power to correct our passions and therefore fails (MacIntyre, 1984). *Telos* is a concept originating in Greek ethics and in this context refers to the ultimate purpose of human life (Audi, 2006). MacIntyre argued that reason is inadequate to define one’s purpose and may be illustrated by the choices people make in the awareness of their demise. Reason often falls behind the passion one has to live one’s life to the fullest.

With respect to utility, MacIntyre stated; “it fails as it can’t explain beliefs in statements of moral truths that are founded in subjectivity” (1984 p. 65).

Utilitarianism is a reason-based ethic founded on achieving maximum benefit for all. However, it fails for similar reasons that reason fails as a *telos*. That is,

when something is a moral principle, which must be followed, lack of utility in implementing the principle is not a case of good moral judgment. MacIntyre (1984) held that one must enact a moral principle that supports a purpose (*telos*) regardless of reason or utility, which may contradict the principle.

Turning to a business perspective on this subject, Ghoshal (2005) observed that human intentions have been excluded from the consideration of business theory due to a belief that business is like a physical science where it is held that intentions and beliefs do not play a role determining the outcome of scientific work. This belief results in the “explicit denial of any role of moral or ethical considerations in the practice of management” which is incorrect because business is a social activity not a physical science (Ghoshal, 2005, p. 79). I believe MacIntyre (1984) would agree that leaving out consideration of intention leaves one without value and morals. But the elimination of intention is consistent with elimination of the concept of *telos* and an underlying implicit assumption that instead, reason and utility serve as moral foundations.

I believe Taylor (2007) would argue that the schema of the rational human justifying him or herself morally on grounds of reason and utility is the expression of what he calls the “modern moral order” which is deeply embedded in the social imaginary of western society (p. 159). Taylor defined the social imaginary as the way in which people “imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these expectations” (2007, p. 71). The significance is that our social imaginary

doesn't just operate within business schools and other fields of academic inquiry as Ghoshal (2005) suggested—it permeates western society.

Ghoshal (2005) acknowledged that changes to the current paradigm within business schools will be difficult without a viable alternative theory, which he believes will arise from the collective work of many participating in an “intellectual pluralism unconstrained by the current paradigm” (p. 88). I agree with this general observation, but it is not just the paradigm of business schools that is challenged. I believe Taylor (2007) and MacIntyre (1984) would suggest that Ghoshal's proposal is contrary to the underlying assumptions of the modern moral order of western society. If Taylor is correct, ethics within western plural society is expressed through the primacy of the individual, the economy, reason, and utility—all of which are central to business education (Ghoshal, 2005). If this is the case, it stands to reason (pardon the irony) that few teachers would be interested in teaching or learning a form of ethics that departs from the modern moral order. They would be heretics, so to speak. It appears that consistent with the long held views of western philosophy, business schools have delivered ethics education on the basis that conscious cognitive reasoning is the primary basis for moral decisions. However, now there is an active debate and search for new approaches due to the ineffectiveness of the current approach.

Ghoshal (2005) and others concerned with business education may have anticipated the findings of an interdisciplinary inquiry of neuroscience and psychology on what it means to be human. For example, the brain of newborn infants has moral evaluative capabilities, and is intentional and intersubjective

(Trevarthen, 2009). That is: “the human brain is an organ evolved to formulate plans for moving, for evaluating the prospects of action emotionally, and for sharing their motives and feelings socially” (Trevarthen, 2009 p. 59). This view supports Ghoshal’s assertions that intentions, relationships, and values are important aspects of what it means to be human and should be acknowledged in ethics and management education.

## **Reasoning is Largely Unconscious, Undergirded by Emotion and Physiology**

The privileged place of reason over emotions and values in business schools was noted above. Next, I wish to briefly consider the broader implications of neuroscience research on reason, emotions, and personal growth or transformation—which is assumed part of virtue ethics education. Recent discoveries are shifting long standing notions of the dual and separate nature of mind and body to one where body, emotions, mind, and reason are understood to operate as an integrated whole (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). What we now know is that the human mind is fully embodied—this includes reasoning, which is founded on cognitive<sup>10</sup> processes that are both conscious and unconscious (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

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<sup>10</sup> Cognitive science defines cognitive as “any kind of mental operation or structure that can be studied in precise terms” (Lakoff & Johnson 1999 p. 11). Therefore, cognitive includes such activities as visual processing, auditory processing (which are unconscious), memory, thought, and language (which are conscious) and mental imagery, emotions, and metaphors, which may or may not be conscious (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). This definition differs from some philosophical traditions where cognitive refers to a conscious conceptual or propositional structure, which employs rule-governed operations where meaning and truth is “defined not internally in the mind or body, but by reference to things in the external world” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999 p. 12).

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) stated that neuroscience shows: “(O)ur concepts cannot be a direct reflection of external, objective, mind-free reality because our sensorimotor system plays a crucial role in shaping them” (p. 44).

They conclude that:

Reason is not disembodied, as the tradition has largely held, but arises from the nature of our brains, bodies, and bodily experience;

Reason is not completely conscious, but mostly unconscious;

Reason is not purely literal, but largely metaphorical and imaginative, and

Reason is not dispassionate, but emotionally engaged. (Lakoff &

Johnson, 1999, p. 4)

Significantly, “it is a rule of thumb among cognitive scientists that unconscious thought is 95% of all thought—and that may be a serious underestimate” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 13). All thought is completely shaped and structured by unconscious thought without which conscious thought would not be possible.

That is, “(A)ll of our knowledge and beliefs are framed in terms of a conceptual system that resides mostly in the cognitive unconscious” and “(U)nless we know our cognitive unconscious fully and intimately, we can neither know ourselves nor truly understand the basis of our moral judgments, our conscious deliberations, and our philosophy” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 15). This shift in understanding impacts psychology, education, and ethics. With respect to psychology,

Panksepp (2009) noted that psychotherapists need to take into account recent neurobiological findings, which demonstrate that as much attention should be

given to the emotional as the cognitive properties of the brain. Further, he observed that cognitive insight is not the primary agent of personal transformation, but rather a consequence of healing that occurs at an emotional level. Therefore, to be consistent with recent research, psychotherapy should shift its long standing emphasis on cognitive analysis to one that employs a bottom up approach to work at the level of affect or emotion, which then emerges as cognitive insight (Panksepp, 2009). This recommendation parallels that of the ancient Daoists and Confucians who were concerned that authentic virtue should emerge authentically and unselfconsciously from the within person and be evident in the body where 'body' is understood as the whole, integrated complex system that a human being is. Hence, the body includes emotions (see chapters four and five).

These findings invert also the traditional banking notion of education, which holds that learning is a matter of depositing information into the heads of students for later retrieval. The notion that there is something of primary value contained within the unconscious poses a challenge regarding the kind of pedagogy that might bring about personal transformation of students, which is called for in virtue ethics education. The kind of ethics education envisioned in virtue ethics sees personal growth or transformation as one of its primary objectives (see chapter two). The question becomes: What pedagogy can be employed in a classroom setting where cognitive insight is so valued over unconscious emotional processes? Recent discoveries in the field of psychotherapy that address healing and transformation of individuals may be

applicable to virtue ethics education as Panksepp (2009) has observed that transformative healing occurs at the emotional level, followed by cognitive insight.

Some of the issues related to introducing ethics education in business schools have been noted above and I believe the shift to addressing unconscious contents of the mind presents a further challenge. Before attempting to address these challenges, the findings of neuroscience regarding how ethical decisions are made are worth considering.

### **Emotions are Important in Moral Decision Making**

In 1994, Damasio first described the critical role of emotions in decision making generally and in respect of ethics. He found that people with damage to the portion of the brain that processes emotions—the frontal lobes—while retaining all of their memory and cognitive processing capabilities, could not make effective decisions. He noted they were able to recall, gather, and analytically process copious amounts of facts, yet were wholly inept at decision making. Individuals with this kind of brain damage had the ability to reason through complex moral problems, however, this did not translate into an ability to make good decisions in life “particularly when it involved personal or social matters” (Damasio, 1994, p. 43).

Damasio concluded “that feelings are a powerful influence on reason, that the brain systems required by the former are enmeshed in those needed by the latter, and that such specific systems are interwoven with those which regulate

the body” (1994, p. 245). Later, he observed that the body, emotions, feelings, and the mind are “disparate manifestations of a single seamlessly interwoven human organism” (Damasio, 2003, p. 7). Building on this work, Bechara, Damasio, and Bar-on (2007) concluded that neuroscience undermined the long standing notion that cognitive processing or logic is “the basis of sound decisions” while “emotions can only cloud the mind and interfere with good judgment” and in fact, “good decision making depends on effective processing of emotions” (2007, p. 273). Effective decision making in general appears to involve the body, emotions, and reasoning operating as an integrated interdependent whole and it seems that this would apply to ethical decision making.

Neuroscience studies confirm the importance of emotions in moral decision making and see moral decisions as the result of complex emotion-cognition interactions (Greene, 2009). Yet, with respect to the details of how emotion and cognition work, the “current neuroscientific understanding of moral judgment is rather crude, conceptualized at the level of gross anatomical brain regions and psychological processes familiar from introspection” (Greene, 2009, p. 26). In support of this hypothesis, Greene examined utilitarian and deontological (reason based ethics) moral decision making, which are two widely accepted ethics models. He concluded that emotions are at the base of both types of decision making despite an emphasis on reasoning. However, while research has shown that the body, emotions, and reason together form the basis



of moral decision making, there are no specifics that can inform ethics pedagogy (Greene, 2005).

## **Virtue Ethics: An Appropriate Ethics Pedagogy Considering Empirical Concerns**

In chapter two, I suggested that reason and utility are incapable of replacing human values rooted in one's purpose and intention. It was proposed that virtue ethics in a modified form of emotional intelligence with the addition of contemplative practices encompasses a broader range of humanness. In what follows, I consider briefly virtue ethics in light of neuroscience and follow this with a consideration of the practical matter of implementing emotional intelligence in a business school setting.

Slingerland (2010) surveyed empirical social psychology and behavioural neuroscience research, including the work of Damasio and Greene. He concluded that ethics based on rational utilitarianism and deontology (reason based ethics) cannot be supported because they are founded on the assumption of controlled cognition—that is “moral reasoning is transparent and under our conscious control” (p. 247)—whereas research strongly indicates that ethical decision making relies primarily on our embodiment, emotions, implicit skills, and unconscious habits as well as cognition. Slingerland went on to propose that the virtue ethics model, despite its philosophical limitations, best approximates the way people participate in moral reasoning and provides the “best framework for formulating a psychologically realistic model of moral reasoning and moral

education (a normative claim)” (p. 276). The features of virtue ethics that set it apart from utilitarian and reason based ethics is that:

ethical behaviour results not from rational, conscious rule following or calculation but rather through the activation of stable, spontaneous and at least partially emotional dispositions, which cause one to respond ethically to specific situations and to reliably perceive the world in certain normatively desirable ways. (Slingerland, 2010, p. 266).

Slingerland suggested that a modern version of Aristotle’s virtue ethics accommodates much of the human psychology described in the empirical studies he cites, but he also proposed that early Chinese virtue ethics offers a rich and informative perspective on the matter of ethics (2010).

## **Emotional Intelligence and Ethics Education**

Returning to the question of business ethics pedagogy, why would anyone in business entertain Aristotle’s ethics modified by concepts derived from ancient Asian practices and if there is a positive answer to this, how can it be made practical and actionable and are there any benefits from doing so? The evidence suggests that incorporating a careful consideration of emotions through emotional intelligence in ethics, leadership, and management offers benefits to the individual, the corporation, and possibly society. Empirical studies indicate that higher levels of emotional intelligence (EI) are related to being ethical (Mesmer-Magnus, Viswesvaran, Joseph, & Deshpande, 2008). Killgore, Killgore, Day, Li, Kamimori, & Balkin (2007) observed that sleep deprivation decreased

moral decision making abilities except in individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence whose “judgments remained more stable and unwavering when confronted with emotional charged dilemmas when sleep deprived” (p. 351). Further, a correlation has been observed between brain neurology and emotional intelligence where it has been noted that: “there is a difference between emotional intelligence and cognitive intelligence” as both are governed by different parts of the brain and they are not strongly correlated in their operation (Bechara et al., 2007, p. 284). Therefore, attending to the development of emotional competencies makes pedagogical sense.

Given the difficulties in implementing business ethics education, there are practical reasons for considering a modified form of emotional intelligence as a foundation for leader ethics pedagogy. Research supports Goleman’s et al. (2002) assertion (noted in chapter two) that the emotional mood of leaders impacts the performance of teams and organizations. That is, the leader’s moods are contagious; they are transferred to subordinates in self-managing groups, and influence group processes that are critical to group effectiveness (Sy, Côté, & Saavedra, 2005). Research indicates that a high EI is beneficial for employees as it is correlated with better work performance, higher positions, greater merit pay, and better interpersonal facilitation skills (Lopes, Grewal, Kadis, Gall, & Salovey, 2006). Programs to improve employee EI have been shown to improve business results (Cherniss, 2004; Lennick, 2007).

From this brief overview, it appears that developing EI is beneficial to both companies and employees and due to these indicated benefits; I believe that it may be more readily adopted as a component of ethics education.

## **Conclusions**

The notion that reason is more highly valued over emotion can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, down through the enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries to the present. The emphasis on reason and conscious thought over emotion and unconscious processes is reflected in our education institutions, pedagogy, and our approach to business. I have presented arguments that suggest this orientation is part of the modern moral order. A number of eminent academics and business people have observed that changing this orientation will be difficult because it is entrenched and because the way forward is not clear. It seems to me that pedagogy and business will change given scientific and practical evidence showing there are reasons and benefits to change. Three observations underpin and inform the suggestion that a modified form of emotional intelligence is part of business ethics pedagogy. First, neuroscience has discovered that good decision making depends on effective processing of emotions. Second, working to develop emotional intelligence competency in the workplace can provide benefits for both employees and institutions. Finally it has been proposed that emotional intelligence was conceptually developed based on the virtue ethic model (Chapter 2) and a review of neuroscience suggests that virtue ethics best matches the features of what it means to be human.

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## **Opening to Passion in the Classroom**

I have supported the development of emotional intelligence and contemplative consciousness for many years in personal situations, community volunteer work, corporate work, and educational settings. I will call this kind of work 'inner work', adopting the term used by my colleague Cohen (2009). In my experience, inner work is not something that is broadly supported or discussed in our culture. The work can be divided into two broad categories: experience and documentation. Here, however, 'experience' is used in a more precise and technical way than how it is usually understood. By 'experience' I mean observing and witnessing one's experience in a careful and precise way. This meaning of experience is close to the meaning of contemplation, and so I will use the latter interchangeably with experience in the present context. To support and amplify this careful witnessing, I also engage in verbally reporting, journaling, and or preparing written summaries. This constitutes documenting one's experience.

Why do we need this elaborate way of experiencing and documenting our experience? This way is intended to change one's behaviour. We cannot change how we think, perceive, feel, and act if we operate in the usual conditioned manner of being and acting. To break out of the conditioning, we need to become aware of what goes on in our consciousness as we go through experiences, especially in the way we engage emotionally with other people, and react to them. Seeing our own reactions, we get a good sense of how we are

conditioned, and by performing the inner work on our experience, we may begin to change ourselves.

In my experience, many learners are initially skeptical and resistant to this work. Contemplation is often viewed as a waste of time. Most people feel they have to be doing something all the time to achieve. Some learners who practice yoga, taiji, or who are familiar with these kinds of practices are not as skeptical. Generally, learners are initially dubious about the value of contemplative exercises, but later report benefits. Apart from the intended purpose of surfacing emotions, some have noted that it helped them sleep better, deal with stress, and even solve problems. Only after gaining experience with contemplation in the context of a supportive environment do people begin to recognize its value.

Documenting one's experience seems to attract the most resistance, but more often than not, learners also express an appreciation and recognition that something of value is gained. Even when writing is undertaken, there often is a reluctance to reveal emotional experiences. Learners might recite texts or other's views instead of their own when the focus is to be on their own emotional reactions. This often changes after several gentle requests. Some learners are uncomfortable discussing their emotions in public. For them, smaller group discussions and writing provide an outlet.

One aspect of how emotions might be engaged through a "learner-coach" exchange is demonstrated below. (I have used the terms 'learner' and 'coach' as many of the experiences I have witnessed are not in the formal teacher-student context.) I have grouped the exchanges into common themes. To provide a

flavour of the exchange, I have put myself in the role of the learner followed by a typical coach response:

***My observation***

*Before, I was not aware of how my day was filled with emotional experiences, which seem to pass without notice. My journal has become like a friend I can talk to and has enabled me to reflect on these experiences and their significance to me without judgment.*

***Typical Coach Response***

*Emotions are a large part of our lives and yet we usually don't give them a second thought. I think it takes an effort for most of us to begin to share our personal thoughts and feelings with others we trust or even acknowledge them to ourselves in a journal. As you note however, once you do, it can be a great learning experience.*

***My Observation***

*Sometimes in the past, my emotions would overwhelm me and I would feel out of control. However, now I can sense my emotions before they become too intense to handle and I know what to do to prevent the feeling of being overwhelmed.*

***Typical Coach Response***

*You mention that you notice you are less impulsive and have less distressing emotions as a consequence of doing this work. Excellent! I hope that you kept a personal record of how you made this transition. This is an important transition and because we are creatures of habit, we often fall back to old patterns. Writing*

*down the process of change serves two purposes: it helps to consolidate the new behaviour and it serves as a record of what you have achieved. So, if you do fall back to old habits you can refer to your previous achievements.*

### **My Observation**

*I can't seem to get past my shortcomings and I have a real problem controlling my feelings of anger about this.*

### **Typical Coach Response**

*It appears you are judging yourself and it may be helpful to acknowledge your feelings and learn from them. An important thing to remember is that we all have strengths and weaknesses. It is human to have both. When thinking about weaknesses it is wise to keep in mind your strengths. Rather than judging and denying our weaknesses and our negative feelings, it is better to know them and acknowledge them. I am not suggesting that you dwell on them, rather just acknowledge and learn from them. Often strong negative and positive emotions can tell you something important about yourself.*

In my business undergraduate class (COHR 301) teaching,<sup>11</sup> I experimented with the above kind of 'learner-coach' exchange, and will provide personal reflections on that experiment. As learning progressed, some learners reported significant and dramatic changes in their lives. Some decided to shift their life focus, some indicated that they had previously repeatedly tried to make

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<sup>11</sup> This is an ethics and values course offered in the Organizational and Behaviour Division of the Sauder School of Business at University of British Columbia. EI development, contemplative exercises, and journaling were components of the course. Details for course are provided in chapter 8.

changes in negative habits without success. However, they were able to make the desired changes. Others mentioned that it helped them solve a particularly difficult situation at work or in their personal lives. Others mentioned changes that were perhaps not so dramatic but were significant to them. For example, some observed that in groups, they were reluctant to speak for fear of being rejected or because they didn't feel they had anything to add. After engaging in inner work, they observed improvement in their communication skills, and they were surprised to find that they were not rejected. Rather, they were engaged more often by their peers and felt more valued and respected by peers.

As the instructor, I found that it was a learning process for me as well as the students. I had worried that inviting emotions into the classroom might result in a loss of control or that I wouldn't be able to handle it. After all, I am not a counselor. Yet, it seems that how I presented the material, designed the syllabus, and framed the exercises provided a safe environment that allowed for emotions and ethical issues to be explored in a positive way. There were one or two occasions when I consulted university services to obtain guidance on sensitive issues. In addition, I discovered one or two students confronting emotional concerns that had also been a challenge to me, which reminded me of my own past and current journey, and occasioned me to consider my own progress emotionally and ethically. The class engaged me intellectually, emotionally, and ethically, and there was more for me to learn.

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## CHAPTER 4<sup>12</sup> NOURISHING LIFE, THE DAOIST

### CONCEPT OF VIRTUE 德

#### Preamble

The intent of chapters four, five, and six is to examine aspects of contemplative practices dedicated to developing the Daoist concept of virtue (*dé*) 德 and to consider whether the practices or concept of virtue can inform business school ethics. This builds on chapter two in which I developed an argument that a modified form of emotional intelligence, augmented by contemplative practices, could comprise part of ethics pedagogy. In this chapter, I will start by exploring the question “Under what conditions and for what reasons (if any) should Daoist practices be part of business ethics pedagogy?” Next, I explore ancient Daoist sources; they differ significantly from western cosmological thinking. Then, I present a justification for the texts that were selected as a focus of this study. Finally, an overview of Daoist concepts relevant to the *Neiye* 內業 and *Huainanzi* 淮南子 is provided.

#### Daoist Contemplative Practices and Business Ethics

Chapter two proposed that contemplative practices should be incorporated in ethics education because they are known to provide students with a reflective space and to interrupt conditioned habits of dualistic thought and emotion, while

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<sup>12</sup> An earlier version of chapter four and five shared the 2010 Paul Tai Yip Ng Memorial award for best Simon Fraser University graduate paper. The award is administered by the David Lam Centre. <http://www.sfu.ca/davidlamcentre/PTYN.html>



retaining the knowledge of how one feels that is vitally important in making practical moral judgments (Vokey, 2005). Chapter three presented neuroscience findings demonstrating that effective moral decision-making relies on both our emotions and thoughts. Why consider the Daoist conception of virtue with respect to education at this point? Apart from my personal interest, I offer several reasons for this choice.

Early versions of Daoist and Confucian virtue hold that the virtuous person, as a consequence of their virtue, influences others to be virtuous. Moral leaders can be particularly influential in this way, and it is not just their words and actions that influence others, but it is held that their presence as moral exemplars influence others to be virtuous through their life energy *qi*<sup>13</sup> which extends beyond their physical presence (Ivanhoe & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999: Major, Queen, Meyer, Roth, 2010). Elaborating and explaining, Ivanhoe (2003) stated:

The ability that certain ethically remarkable people have to attract others to them, to put them at ease, and perhaps to increase their level of self-awareness and sensitivity is a phenomenon attested in our own age as well as in this ancient classic. (p. xxix)

If this is the case, being virtuous has implications for the moral standards and education of leaders due to their influence on others.

Chapter two and three proposed for a number of reasons that virtue ethics arising out of Aristotelian thinking is consistent with how the brain functions and the way that people are observed to make ethical decisions. This begs the

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<sup>13</sup> The concept of *qi* is addressed later in this chapter.

question, what kind of ethics do Daoists espouse? It has been proposed that both Confucian (Slingerland, 2010) and Daoist (Ivanhoe & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999) versions of virtue are forms of virtue ethics and applicable to the concerns of society and in particular the field of education. Ames (1998) has argued that Chinese Confucian virtue applies to social relationships, while the Daoist version extends its purview to include the world and environment around us (Ames, 1998). Given our current concern regarding the human impact on the environment, it seems appropriate to consider the version of virtue that is more encompassing.

Ivanhoe (2003) observed that Daoists emphasize the need to return to a “prereflective” and spontaneous state of mind as a means of developing virtue. Expanding on the notion of prereflective Ivanhoe observes:

In order to realize the kind of life the Daoist recommends, we must pare away our inherited notions of right and wrong and return to the prereflective simplicity of Nature. (See chapter 48 [of the *Daodejing*]). If people do this, society too will “return” to the earlier, golden age of the *dao* 道. (2003, p. xxiv)

Ivanhoe (2003) further observes that the text, “describe(s) the idea of abandoning one’s self to the prereflective promptings of the *dao*, a benign and bountiful power” (p. xxvi). This is consistent with the concept that *dao* cannot be described or bound by concepts or words and yet is a power in the world. In practical terms, when one observes nature in the form of plants and animals, it is plain that much gets accomplished without conscious thought and intervention.

Similarly, people function effectively every day in a prereflective or unselfconscious mode (Ivanhoe, 2011). Ivanhoe described the impact of self-conscious seeing, doing, or being; for example “(m)ost of us would agree that being overly concerned with how one is doing or how one’s action or behaviour is being perceived by others can corrupt and undermine one’s performance” (Ivanhoe, 2011, p. 129). The meaning of unselfconscious is further elaborated in considering the stories of skilled masters found in the *Zhuangzi*, who, due to their alignment with the *dao* perform tasks perfectly, unselfconsciously, and apparently effortlessly (Ivanhoe, 2011). The emphasis on prereflective, unselfconsciousness, and unconscious processes in Daoist thinking highlights the value placed on the unconscious thought processes. In Daoist thinking, an emphasis on the value of unselfconscious seeing, doing, and being extends to enabling harmony with the *dao* (Ivanhoe, 2011). In the context of the Roth’s translation (1999) of the *Neiye*, (considered in detail in chapter five), I believe this is referred to as the arrival of the numinous mind.

The Daoist emphasis on the unconscious mind stands in contrast to today’s world, in which the human qualities of intellect, creativity, and autonomy are greatly valued. Ivanhoe (2003) observed that excesses in these qualities can lead to dangers. China, at the time when the *Daodejing* was written, already had a long history of innovation and achievement, which was proven useless and perhaps even the cause of “massacre, famine, hypocrisy, cruelty, and terror” (Ivanhoe, 2003, p. xxiv). Despite our great technological advances, the dangers of ancient China are not unlike the dangers we face today. Ivanhoe (2003)

observed that, in our own time, finding a way to keep the conscious qualities we value so much in balance by giving more time for the pre-reflective and spontaneous aspects of our natures might lead us to discover, appreciate, and live more harmonious and satisfying lives. Perhaps Ivanhoe (2003) was cautious in making this statement as his interpretation of the *Daodejing* states that the cultivation of virtue (*dé*<sup>14</sup>): enables the sage to move others to abandon the insanity of normal society and return without coercion to the peace, contentment, and prosperity of the *dao* (p. xxvi & xxvii).

Finally, as noted in chapter three, neuroscience is discovering that the unconscious plays a foundational role in our conscious lives. Ethical decisions are formed intuitively and unconsciously in response to somatic and emotional affect (Haidt, 2001). Haidt observed that that conscious moral reasoning “is usually a post hoc construction, generated after a judgment has been reached” (p. 814).

This supports the view that unconscious cognitive processes, embodied perception, and emotional response play an important role in ethical decision making. This is parallel to ancient Chinese and Daoist thinking, in which contemplative practices are oriented towards developing virtue. “One of the most ancient assumptions about human psychology in China is that the various aspects of human psychological experience are associated with, or even based on, certain physiological substrates or conditions” (Roth, 1991, p. 602). The inner training practices first articulated in the *Neiye*, which link “psychological

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<sup>14</sup> The meaning of *dé* is elaborated later in this chapter.

experience to physiological conditions” (Roth, 1991, p. 603), are basic to Daoist teachings.

## **Caveats in Considering Ancient Daoist Sources**

When considering Daoist texts, Kirkland (2004) provided a caveat that is worth keeping in mind. He observed that Daoists have not been interested in articulating or defending specific propositions about life; therefore:

Identifying and analyzing its ‘basic ideas’ has always led to inaccurate conclusions. The more meaningful approach is to ask not what a Daoist thinks, but rather what a Daoist does. And from that perspective, it seems that Daoists throughout history have generally been people who agreed that they should refine and transform themselves to attain full integration with life’s deepest realities. (Kirkland, 2004, p. 75)

I would add, to know this “philosophy” one should “do it,” which is consistent with the greater emphasis Daoists place on experience over language. Here I use the word philosophy in the sense of the ancient Greeks, who considered philosophy as a practice and way of life rather than only an intellectual exercise (Hadot & Davidson, 1995).

Another difficulty in considering ancient Daoist sources is that they offer a cosmology that differs significantly from a western perspective. Daoist instructions for personal cultivation, which underlies the assumption of the connection of the physical and the psychological, also differs from dominant western thinking. Daoism includes an assumption that each person is comprised

of a unity of matter, emotions, vital energy, and spirit, the unity of which in its highest form is considered the *dao*. In this conception, cultivation involves bringing into awareness subtle vital energies and spirit, thereby transforming the individual. This has also been referred to as inner work, inner alchemy, and or a form of mysticism. So, in considering Daoist cultivation to inform 21st century ethics pedagogy, an unfamiliar cosmology and unfamiliar assumptions about the unity of the person and matters of spirituality will be encountered. For example, one of the outcomes of cultivation in the thinking of some but not all Daoists is immortality (Kirkland, 2004). For these reason, western writers have struggled with interpretations of this and other Daoist concepts because many writers “felt compelled to defend the axiomatic assumptions of the Enlightenment narrative by somehow *redefining* Daoism in such a way as to demonstrate that ‘true Daoists’ never really believed anything that we today do not believe” (Kirkland, 2004, p 174). Indeed, some of the concepts presented at the physiological, psychological, and spiritual levels are foreign and not part of our modern narrative. For example, technical terms and concepts unfamiliar to western medical and psychological traditions such as *qi* or vital energy, vital essence, and numen are used to describe the linkage between the physical and the psychological and stages in personal cultivation. In making this observation, I am not suggesting abandoning scientific rigour. Rather, I am proposing that it is useful to keep an open mind, as there may be something valuable to learn from the ancient Chinese perspective and in particular the Daoists as they start with the assumption that the body and emotions play an important role in decision

making, while reason plays a more nuanced role than previously thought in the western tradition.

### **Rationale for Selecting the *Neiye* 內業 and *Huainanzi* 淮南子.**

Between the fourth to second centuries BCE, the Chinese were engaged in a dynamic and multivocal discourse on virtue (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006). The *Neiye* 內業, *Daodejing* 道德經, *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 recorded in this period were very much related to one another and a part of this discourse (Roth, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 2006; Major et al., 2010). However, the categories of Confucian and Daoist did not exist in the lives or minds of people who lived in China (Kirkland, 2004). Rather, these categories were fabricated much later, during the Han dynasty (206 BCE–221 CE). The teachings of these so-called groups, while differing in some respects, share many similar ideas and practices. For example, *Mencius* (372–289 BCE), perhaps the most prominent Confucian thinker after Confucius, held that it was very important that a person ‘cultivate’ an invisible life-force called *qi* 氣 (vital energy), a belief and practice central to the so-called Daoists (Kirkland, 2004). Of particular relevance to this work, Ivanhoe and Csikszentmihalyi (1999) noticed significant similarities in the Daoist and Confucian concept of virtue. In determining whether a particular text is Daoist, Roth (1999) stated “it must exhibit evidence of inner cultivation practice and the distinctive nexus of ideas that developed from it, especially a cosmology based on *dao* as the underlying power of the human and natural worlds” (p. 174).

Many elements of Daoist imagery and practice can be traced to the *Neiye*

(Kirkland, 2004) that dates from the early fourth century BCE and parallels the *Daodejing* dated to the mid to late fourth century BCE (Roth, 1999). Evidence suggests, however, that both texts are based on an older oral tradition (Roth, 1999). A distinct group of people can be labelled Daoist because they followed and recommended to others a practice of inner cultivation first enunciated in the *Neiye* (Roth, 1999). The *Neiye* espouses an apophatic model of cultivation where the practitioner purifies him or her self through stillness, restraining thoughts and desires, and clearing the mind of clutter (Kirkland, 2004). This practice is basic to the teachings of the *Daodejing* and other Daoist texts and teachings down to the present (Kirkland, 2004). The influence of the inner training of the *Neiye* cannot be overstated. Its practices are alluded to by Mencius, Xunzi, another influential Confucian, and touched upon by the authors of the *Zhuangzi* and the *Daodejing*—both considered canonical Daoist texts that were written after the *Neiye* (Roth, 1991; Slingerland, 2000).

The *Huainanzi* was prepared by a large collection of scholars and presented to Emperor Wu of the state of Huainan in 139 BCE. It drew on four main textual sources including the *Zhuangzi*, *Laozi*, the legalist text of *Hanfeizi*, and the *Lüshi chunqiu*, an anthology of Chinese thought prepared in the warring states period (403-221 BCE) that articulated the concepts of yin-yang and five phases theory. In addition, it references the work of Confucian classics such as *Lunyu*, *Mencius*, *Xunzi*, and *Zisizi* (Major et al., 2010). It is a syncretic text that attempts to unify a variety of pre-existing Chinese philosophical and religious



currents into a unified scheme for providing guidance to young aspiring leaders (Major et al., 2010).

Contemporary scholars have debated its intellectual affiliation for many years and have not come to an agreement. Major et al., (2010) observed that Roth for example, held that “despite the broad array of pre-Han sources from which it draws, in its cosmology and methods of self-cultivation, it remains squarely within a tradition of both philosophy and practice that borrows from earlier Daoist sources” such as the *Neiye*, the *Daodejing*, and the *Zhuangzi* (Major et al., 2010, p.32). “In contrast, Meyer and Queen emphasize the *Huainanzi*’s own claim to be above and beyond classification” (Major et al. 2010, p.32). For the purposes of this work, it can be concluded that the *Huainanzi* was heavily influenced by Daoist thought and practice. For example, through repeated references, it advises leaders that they must adopt the teachings of the *Neiye* in order to be authentic individuals and effective leaders (Major et al., 2010).

While the *Neiye* focused on individual psychology and cultivation, the *Huainanzi* extends and articulates a deeper understanding of psychology and leadership than is contained in both the *Neiye* and the *Daodejing* (Major et al., 2010). Since my objective is to develop ethics pedagogy for business leaders, chapter five will examine the *Neiye* first for insights regarding personal cultivation and then turn to consider the *Huainanzi* in chapter six for further insights regarding cultivation and matters that might be applicable to leaders. Before

proceeding to the review of the texts, I provide an overview of Daoist concepts important to the *Neiye* and the *Huainanzi* with respect to cultivation of virtue.

## **Overview of Daoist Key Concepts in the *Neiye* 內業 and *Huainanzi* 淮南子**

### **The Daoist Concept of Virtue *Dé* 德**

According to Nivison and Van Norden (1996), the word 德 (pronounced *dé*, which is also and the current Romanization of the Mandarin word) has been uncomfortably translated as *virtue* as the English word does not capture the full meaning of the Chinese word. The word has also been translated in a number of other ways such as charisma, force, or psychic power (Nivison & Van Norden, 1996). Others propose related but different meanings such as an ethical force which can transform others (Van Norden, 2007); power, moral force (Waley as cited in Van Norden, 2007); inner power (Roth, 1999); life energy in things and virtue or a Confucian sense of morality (Henricks, 1989); that which nourishes (Lai, 2004); potency (Major et al., 2010); and capacity or receipt (Wagner, 2000). The meaning of the word has changed over the long history of its use from antiquity where it was first noticed in divination messages inscribed in bones dated to 1200 BCE through the classical period to the present (Nivison & Van Norden, 1996; Van Norden, 2007).

In the context of the *Huainanzi* and the *Neiye*, *dé* can be considered in broad terms as applying to any entity—specifically to humans. In broad terms, whenever the perfect operation of the Way (*dao*) is present in the universe, *dé* is manifest; that is, “whenever any being or thing perfectly embodies the Way (*dao*)

in space and time, its unique Potency (*dé*) is on display” (Meyer, 2010, p. 872). In human terms, *dé* “derives from perfectly embodying the Way (*dao*) in the workings of their (sages) minds and bodies, a state that for most people is consistently achievable only through self-cultivation” (Meyer, 2010, p. 873). From the perspective of cultivation, it is worth noting that the *Neiye* (Roth, 1999) and *Huainanzi* (Major et al., 2010) emphasize the linkage of tranquility, virtue (*dé*), and the body. In certain contexts, it implies the kind of morality that is identified with humaneness and rightness. However, it does not mean that “Potency (*dé*) and Moral Potency (a moral component of *dé*) are two distinct phenomena” (Meyer, 2010, p. 873); rather, moral *dé* is part of a continuum with primordial forms of *dé*. Therefore, when the *Huainanzi* and the *Neiye* speak of nourishing and embracing *dé*, it is implied that this includes but is not limited to moral *dé*.

Given the variety of senses and translations, henceforth, except where I use direct quotes, I will use the term *dé*. While there is not the same debate regarding the meaning of *dao* that has been translated as “the Way,” as a convention, except where I am using direct quotes I will refer to it as *dao*. In addition, as a convention I will refer to Roth’s inward training as the *Neiye*.

### **The Daoist Concept of *Dao* 道**

In verse six in the *Neiye*, *dao* is described as the power or force through which all things are generated and develop to completion (Roth, 1999). “On a personal level it is very important; for example, people are sustained when they attain it and harmonious when they accord with it” (Roth, 1999, p.143).

When people lose it they die;  
When people gain it they flourish.  
When endeavors lose it they fail;  
When they gain it they succeed. (Roth, 1999, p. 143)

The Way has an ineffable and mysterious quality, yet paradoxically, it is very concrete. For example, it is described as:

Clear! As though right by your side, not distant and something with which you could be roped together. Indeed, it is further described as something that abides within the mind, something that arises with me and something that infuses the body and, we daily make use of its inner power. (Roth, 1999, pp. 142–143).

Here we see that *dao* is concrete, it is a generative power in the world, and has *dé*. It is always present and resides within the bodies and minds of people who can make use of *dao*'s *dé*. Those who are in accord with *dao* will experience significant benefits; they flourish and succeed. It is a constantly moving power that seems to come and go within the human mind, but it can be invited to reside within the human mind through inner cultivation (Roth, 1999). To Roth's (1999) observations that *dao* is concrete I would add that the *Neiye* states that it is ordered. Verse four states: "Yet we can perceive an order to its accomplishments" (Roth, 1999, p. 52). Later, I propose that aligning or ordering the mind in accord with tranquility of *dao* plays an important role in the cultivation of *dao*. Paradoxically, despite the evidence of its concrete presence, *dao* is ineffable as articulated in verse six.

As for the Way:

It is what the mouth cannot speak of.

The eyes cannot see.

And the ears cannot hear. It is further called vague and indiscernible, silent and obscure and indiscernible. It is also said to have neither root nor trunk, leaves nor flowers, a sign that it cannot be analyzed—nor does it function—according to the normal laws of sequential causation in the plant life that flourishes in the natural world. (Roth, 1999, p.142)

Despite the presence of *dao* manifesting in a concrete manner, it is paradoxical, ineffable, vague, indiscernible, and not subject to the normal laws of nature. The importance of *dao* in cultivation should not be underestimated, “It (the Way) is the basis for the entire practice of inner cultivation” (Roth, 1999, p.56). In terms of the cultivation process, Roth (1999) stated: “The Way is always present within human beings, however, the awareness of this presence enters the human mind only when it is properly cultivated” (p.103). Roth (1999) further stated: “The authors of the *Neiye* propose a program of self-discipline by which this ineffable Way can be grasped, halted, fixed, or directly experienced within the mind in a nondual awareness that precedes words” (p. 143).

The importance of *dao* in cultivation is clear from the above. The process of inner training proposed in the *Neiye* is the means by which the *dao* can be experienced in the mind and *dé* plays an important role in cultivation. Now I turn to a discussion on *dé* and its close relationship with *dao*.

## The Relationship of *Dao* 道 and *Dé* 德

The *Neiye* states there is a close association between *dao* and *dé*. Verse four states: “Daily we make use of its inner power (*dé*).” The Way is what infuses the body” (Roth, 1999, p. 52). And, verse 17, states, cultivation “returns you to the Way and its inner power” (Roth, 1999, p. 78). Both statements highlight the close association of the two. According to Roth (1999), *Techniques of the Mind Part I* is a chapter of the same genre as the *Neiye* both of which are contained in the *Guanzi*, a repository of ancient Chinese literature. *Techniques of the Mind Part I* states, “There is no gap between the Way and inner power. Thus to speak of them is not to differentiate them” (Roth, 1996, p. 135). Here again we see the close association of *dao* and *dé*; they are however, differentiated in their action:

That which is empty and formless, we call it the Way.

That which transforms and nourishes the myriad things, we call inner power (*dé*).

The Way of Heaven is empty and formless. Empty, then it does not submit. Formless, then it is nowhere obstructed. It is nowhere obstructed and so it universally flows through the myriad things and does not alter.

(Roth, 1996, p. 134)

Thus *dao*, despite being empty, formless, is present everywhere and is manifested in the world through its *dé*, which transforms and nourishes the myriad things. *Dé* is an expression of *dao* in the world. Further, the following statements suggest that *dé* is where one finds *dao* in the world, that one uses *dé* to attain *dao* and that attaining *dao* characterizes *dé*. Continuing with a

description of the relationship of *dao* and *dé*, Roth's (1996) translation of *Techniques of the Mind Part I* is as follows:

Inner power (*dé*) is the lodging place of the Way.

Things attain it and are thereby generated.

Human awareness attains it and thereby directs the vital essence of the Way.

Therefore inner power means, "to attain." "To attain" means to attain the means by which it is so, and

To lodge the Way characterizes inner power. (p. 135)

These appear to be circular and self-referential statements that speak to the *dao-dé* relationship and they demonstrate a differentiation yet close link between the two. Nivison and Van Norden (1996) made similar observations about the nature of *dao*, *dé*, and their relationship and see a paradox with respect to the development of *dé*. He noted that in Daoism, *dao* is "the center of gravity of all nature" which "enables everything to be what it is; it claims no credit, does no pushing, and all is ordered." *Dé* is a concept somewhat in contrast to *dao*:

It is said to be localization of the *dao* in a particular thing; but it retains its *dao*-character—it enables that things to be what it is, alive, intelligent, causally interconnected with other things, as the case maybe. *Dé* thus is what the thing "gets" from the *Dao* to be itself. (Nivison & Van Norden, 1996, p.33)

Nivison and Van Norden (1996) noted that the concept of *dé* generates a paradox: that is, to acquire *dé* one has to have it already and worse, to seek it is to seek an advantage, which is not virtuous.

The conundrum on how to cultivate *dé* and perhaps the reason for the variety of ways in which it is translated may be rooted in the term being considered in human terms in two senses. First, *dé*, from a human perspective, is the manifestation and action of the *dao* in the particulars of human life. Second, *dé* is the means by which humans cultivate the *dao*. Each sense of *dé* results in slightly different but related descriptions of *dé*. The two senses might be thought of metaphorically as a river. The downstream flow emanating from *dao* is *dé*, the action and manifestation of *dao* in human affairs and while the movement upstream represents the human process of returning to *dao* by simultaneously developing *dé* and using *dé*. This provides a description *dao*, *dé*, their relationship, and a high level understanding of how *dao* and *dé* might be engaged at a human level. To take this investigation further, I begin where there appears to be a connection between modern science and ancient Daoist thinking—in the concept of how emotions, the body, ethics, and wisdom are linked.

### ***Qi* 氣 and its Relationship to *Dao* 道 and Humans 人 .**

*Qi*, from a cosmological perspective, is both matter and energy and is fundamental to the make up the universe. In human terms, it is known as vital energy or vital breath (*qi*). It is of central importance to the cosmological, cultural, and political concerns of the *Huainanzi* (Meyer, 2010) and is especially



important in the process of cultivation described in the *Neiye* (Roth, 1999). All the motions of the cosmos, and all organic processes of living beings are produced by the movement and transformation of *qi*. Chan (2010) articulates the significance of *qi* and its relationship to *dao* and living beings:

The *dao* is “the root of all creative transformation.” From a state of absolute “vacuity” or “nothingness” (*wu* 無), a process of autogenesis ensued, through which the “original” life generating *qi* (*yuanqi* 元氣) spontaneously came into play (*zihua* 自化). A further differentiation saw the appearance of the *yin* and *yang qi*, which in turn gave rise to the “myriad beings.” (p. 4)

Chan observed that the:

The fundamental assertion that the transformation of *qi* unlocks the mystery of Daoist creation makes more than a cosmological point, for it helps define the hermeneutical boundaries of philosophical reflection. It explains not only the origins of the “myriad beings,” but significantly also the shape and substance of individual human life and the differences among them. Every aspect of a person’s life, be it physical endowment, intelligence, personality traits, or moral capacity, is seen to be a manifestation of his or her *qi* endowment. (p. 6).

This endowment of *qi* determines one’s innate nature, which is vitally important in humans and plays an important role in self-cultivation, as we shall see next.

## Daoist Cultivation of Virtue: Emotions (*Qing*) 情, Innate Nature (*Xing*) 性, Mind (*Xin*) 心 and Tranquility (*Jing*) 靜

The foregoing provides a cosmological framework for cultivation offered by the concepts of *dao*, *dé*, and *qi*. In chapters four and five, my focus is primarily on the *Neiye* (fourth century BCE) and the *Huainanzi* (second century BCE).

However, I have selected Chan's (2010) review of Wu Yun's later work (eighth century CE) for analysis here because he specifically considers the role of innate nature, emotions, mind, and tranquility in the cultivation of a Daoist sage and he philosophically considers cultivation in the context of Daoist cosmology. Chan (2010) observed that Wu Yun draws from and remains true to the concepts presented in earlier canonical Daoist texts such as the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*. For the purpose of this work, it is a useful reference that provides a perspective and context for earlier Daoist materials.

According to Wu Yun, each individual is endowed with a unique innate nature (*xing*), which is formed by *qi* (Chan, 2010, p.7). This unique nature is situated in a constellation of four components, the first of which involves emotions and all of which are involved in the growth and development of individuals. Chan recounts these conditions as articulated by Wu Yun:

*qing* 情 – the individual's affectivity, emotions, and desires which is characterized by movement and is an inalienable part of *xing* (2010, p. 7-10);

*xing* 性 – a simultaneously unique and universal inborn nature of each individual, which guides *xin* (p. 7);

*xin* 心 – the heart-mind which is guided by one’s inborn nature, but in operational terms the heart-mind actually feels and thinks and directs the movement of inborn nature (p. 11), and

*jing* 靜 – utmost tranquility characterized by stillness, a universal human inborn state to which most can return because it is part of one’s innate nature and is at the root of all the Daoist schools as the basis for self cultivation. (p. 9–11)

Human life is determined by the four concepts outlined above, which in turn are bound by the nature of *qi*. These concepts are nested, and potentially contradictory or paradoxical. For example, if emotions characterized by movement are an inalienable part of one’s innate nature, which governs the mind, how is this logically reconciled with tranquility?

The logic is that the *dao* encompasses the universals of limitlessness, tranquility, and perfection as well as the specifics of particularity, uniqueness, and motion. Why must one encompass particularity of uniqueness and motion? Because “at a higher conceptual level, the movement of *qi* remains vital to cosmic and human flourishing. Although it is true that the arousal of affectivity will inevitably upset the stability of *xing* (innate nature), it cannot be argued that the Daoist remedy lies in cutting off the capacity of *qing* (emotions)” as this would “amount to extinguishing the flow of *qi* and (be) suicidal” (Chan, 2010, p. 11).

“What is envisioned, rather, is an ideal state in which the mind is quiet and *qi* moves about smoothly and calmly or phrased differently, the body is active and the mind is quiet” (Chan, 2010, p. 11). Hall and Ames (1998) stated that tranquility is “not passivity but an ongoing, dynamic achievement of equilibrium” which “stands in a dominant relationship to agitation rather than excluding it utterly” (p. 49). Why would one wish to attempt to reconcile motion and tranquility, the contradictory aspects of human nature?

Chan (2010) states that the outcome of this reconciliation is a transcendence of movement and stillness resulting in: “The ideal ethical and spiritual state” (p. 14). Why is it considered an ethical state? Because: “Despite ceaseless transformations, the *dao* never becomes exhausted . . . The inexhaustibility of *dao* reflects not only its power and also purity; that is to say, its operations are clear of pathological movements” (2010, p. 11). Here, ethicality is defined in terms of purity and limitlessness; we can access this state by emulating or mirroring the source from which it originates. Second, transcendence of movement and stillness is a return to the source of life. Chan stated: “That which gives life is the *dao*” (p. 8), and the “spirit of a person receives its essence from the *dao*” (p. 11). Because the essence of the *dao*, free of pathology, pure, and inexhaustible is within each person, it is possible for most to access or return to the state of purity and limitlessness.

How does one cultivate a state where motion and stillness are transcended? Through the process of inner cultivation led by the mind through which one learns to simultaneously accommodate motion and stillness, emotion

and tranquility. The process of cultivation is the focus of the *Neiye* and the *Huainanzi* by repeated reference to the *Neiye* (Major, et al, 2010) where tranquility is a key concept and goal (Roth, 1999, p. 109) and the outcome of cultivation is the unselfconscious expression of *dé* (virtue) in one's life.

The *Neiye* presents an in depth description of the process of cultivating virtue *dé* taking into account two of Chan's (2010) components—emotions and tranquility—and introduces the important concept of emergence and the role of the body. With respect to the remaining components, consideration of the role of the mind is present in the *Neiye* but not as fully developed as in the *Huainanzi*, which also introduces and develops the concept of innate nature. Chapter five and six will give a detailed consideration of these texts in light of the four components identified in Chan's work.

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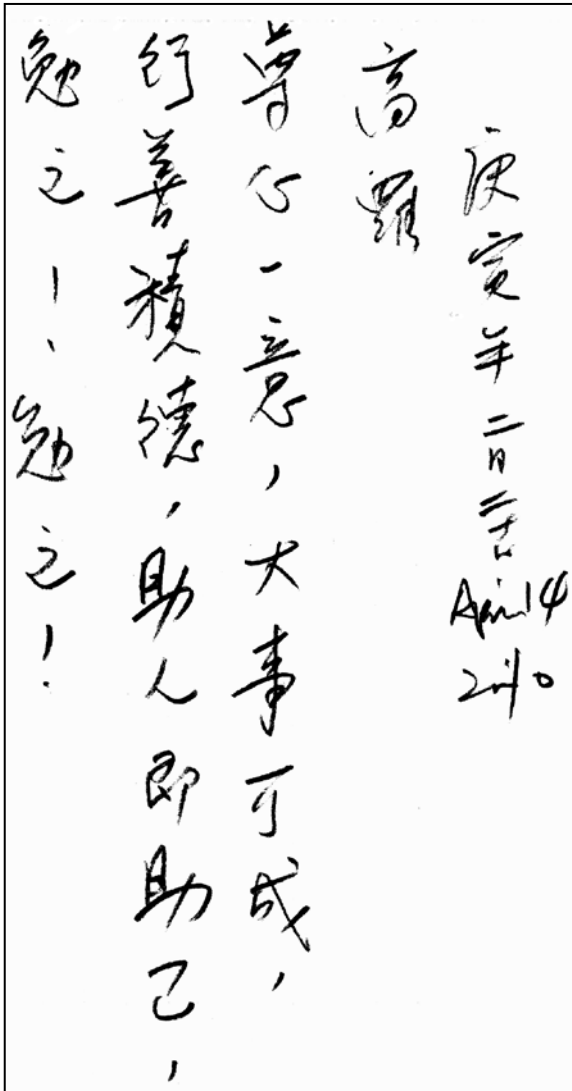
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## **Divining Virtue**

On April 4th 2010, a group of students and I visited a Daoist temple to witness the Sunday morning worship and see a Daoist spirit writer in action. While we were waiting for the ceremony to begin, students talked with a Chinese woman who appeared to be in her 50s. She turned out to be the spirit writer. She told us that spirit messages may not be direct and the meaning may only be known in retrospect. She said that while one is born into certain circumstances, the turn of events in one's life are entirely up to the sincerity and actions of the individual and her or his Karma, which includes that of their ancestors. She told us that Daoist worthies do not provide protection, and do not change the future so it is not appropriate to ask for protection or changed circumstances.

One may ask a Daoist worthy a written question, which is placed on the temple altar and burned, and the spirit writer's response is shaped as an advice. The spirit writer does not see the question. Under the altar is a large drawer covered in white sand. The spirit writer holds two branches, one in each hand, and moves them in a circular fashion until a Chinese character appears in the sand, which she reads aloud and which is recorded by another person.



I was fortunate enough to have an opportunity to ask a question and obtain a response that spoke directly to my concern and the topic of the paper in this chapter that I was writing at the time. It said:

*With single minded concentration great things can be accomplished.*

*Do good deeds and accumulate virtue, for helping others is to help yourself .*

*Persevere, persevere!*

The version prepared by an assistant who recorded the spirit writer's words

as she spoke them is shown on this page. At first, I wondered whether these were stock sayings like those that came out of fortune cookies. However, I was told that the temple kept a record of them and they were all unique. At the time when this reading was done, I was in the process of writing the contents of chapter four and five. These chapters are about the process of developing the Daoist concept of virtue, *dé*, according to the *Neiye*. Clearly, there is a connection between the spirit writer's reading and my study of the *Neiye*.

## CHAPTER 5 CULTIVATION OF VIRTUE (*DÉ*) 德

### ACCORDING TO THE *NEIYE* 內業<sup>15</sup>

#### Preamble

Chapter four provided an introduction and outline of Daoist concepts relevant to the *Neiye* and the *Huainanzi*. This chapter focuses on the processes and personal inner work required to cultivate *dé* as articulated in the *Neiye*.

According to Roth (1999), the *Neiye* is comprised of a set of poetic verses about the nature of human beings and a type of breathing meditation aimed at achieving health, longevity, and noetic insights. It is important to note that the emphasis is on the individual, not society, culture, or politics as is found in the *Daodejing* or the *Huainanzi*. As chapter four observed, it is a text with significant influences on early Chinese culture that can be traced through to current Daoist contemplative practices. Chapter four also outlined four components: emotions, innate nature, mind, and tranquility (Chan, 2010) that are involved in the growth and development of individuals as they engage in the process of inner cultivation. In this chapter, the *Neiye* is explored for its contribution to understanding the role of emotions, tranquility, the body, and emergence in the development of virtue.

I begin with an interpretation of the first two verses of the *Neiye*, which outline the purpose of the text. This is followed by a discussion of the concepts

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<sup>15</sup> An earlier version of chapter four and five shared the 2010 Paul Tai Yip Ng Memorial award for best Simon Fraser University graduate paper. The award is administered by the David Lam Centre. <http://www.sfu.ca/davidlamcentre/PTYN.html>

of emergence and tranquility and a description of the process of inner cultivation where the role of the physical body in cultivation is outlined. The outcomes of cultivation on one's awareness, emotions, and emergence of virtues in daily life are considered next, which leads into a conversation regarding the distinction between self-conscious and emergent unselfconscious expressions of virtue. Insights for contemporary ethics education are outlined.

### **Interpreting the First Two Verses as a Summary of Inner Cultivation**

The first two verses of the *Neiye* provide a summary of inner cultivation and the return to the *dao*. A brief description of the components involved in cultivation and their relationship helps in understanding the summary. *Qi* is associated with life and vitality. Human beings are made up of systems containing varying densities of *qi*, such as the skeletal structure, the skin, flesh and musculature, the breath, and the various psychological states comprising our constantly changing continuum of experience from rage and lust to complete tranquility (Roth, 1999). *Qi* is an unrefined form and the source of *jing* (vital essence) (Roth, 1999). Human beings generate or refine *jing* (vital essence) through the guiding of *qi*. Yet, a recursive or positive feedback relationship exists between the two (Roth, 1999). For example, pooling of *jing* (vital essence) enhances psychological calmness and physical vitality, which in turn generates more *qi* (Roth, 1999). Both *qi* and *jing* (vital essence) are secured or cultivated through *de* (Roth, 1999).

Verse one of the *Neiye* implies that people can become sages through a return to the *dao* and this is achieved by storing vital essence (*jing*) in their chest,

which is a highly refined type of vital energy (*qi*) (Meyer, 2010) and a physiological correlate of *dé* (Roth, 1999). Verse one states:

The vital essence (*jing*) of all things:  
It is this that brings them to life  
It generates the five grains below  
And becomes the constellated stars above.  
When flowing amid the heavens and the earth  
We call it ghostly and numinous.  
When stored within the chests of human beings,  
We call them sages (Roth, 1999, p. 47).

Verse two continues by stating that *qi*:

Cannot be halted by force,  
Yet can be secured by inner power (*dé*).  
Cannot be summoned by speech,  
Yet can be welcomed by awareness.  
Reverently hold onto it and do not lose it:  
This is called “developing inner power” (Roth, 1999, p. 48).

While Roth did not articulate this concept in his interpretation, given the above, it might also be concluded that the *Neiye* is a manual for cultivating and developing *dé* as a means of returning to the *dao*. It gives considerable attention to the role of emergence, tranquility, and emotions in the process of inner training and the cultivation of *dé* as described next.

## Emergence and Tranquility in the *Neiye*

The three components of developing *dé*, noted above, do not resolve the circularity of using *dé* to develop *dé* as observed by Nivison and Van Norden (1996). Elaborating, “Apparently, to acquire this virtue (*dé*) one has to have it already. Worse, to seek this virtue is to seek an advantage, which is unvirtuous” (p. 56). The circularity is resolved through reference to Mencius who held that we are all virtuous but need to discover and develop it (Nivison & Van Norden, 1996). Verse two of the *Neiye* provides an indication of how circularity is resolved with the concept of emergence. It proposes that, when *dé* develops, wisdom emerges (Roth, 1999, p. 48). This is consistent with Mencius’ assumption that virtue is already present within people but adds the dimension that in addition to activities that consciously develop *dé*—as proposed by Mencius and other Confucians (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006)—it can be nurtured to unconsciously emerge as a plant will grow all on its own if it is given proper care. Emergence is a critical concept in the *Neiye*; it refers to the natural growth processes witnessed in nature and is assumed to support the emergence of *dé* in people.

Previously it was noted that *dao* can be invited to be present in humans, however, this occurs only when it is properly cultivated. This cultivation is guided by tranquility described in verse seven (Roth, 1999, p. 58). Roth interpreted this verse to suggest that despite emotional peaks and valleys, tranquility is an inherent quality of human beings. Sages are rare beings who are able to truly create the conditions of tranquility (Roth, 1999). He also observed that the

principle of tranquility is a key concept and goal of the *Neiye* with the term appearing in 11 of the 26 verses (Roth, 1999). The principle that permits awareness of *dao* to emerge in humans is that of tranquility and this requires the establishment of certain physical and mental enabling conditions, as we shall see below.

### **Inner Cultivation: Alignment to Enable Tranquillity to Emerge**

According to Roth (1999), tranquility is preceded by a fourfold alignment as follows:

- aligning the body
- aligning the four limbs
- aligning the breath and vital energy (*qi*)
- aligning the mind. (p. 109)

Roth (1999) stated that the fourfold alignment refers to “adjusting or lining up something with an existing pattern or form” (p.109). Being aligned precedes being tranquil and both are the basis for developing a stable or concentrated mind, and *dé* (Roth 1999). It appears that the purpose of the fourfold alignment is to become tranquil, the ruling principle of humans.

The term tranquility is closely associated with mental states such as peace of mind, a calm mind, stable mind, well-ordered mind, and concentrated mind. This state of mind mirrors the *dao*; “Yet we can perceive an order to its [the Way’s] accomplishments” (Roth, 1999, p. 52). Therefore, a tranquil mind accords with or mirrors *dao*, and achieves a range of benefits, which will be

considered in more detail later. Thus, we might conclude that an important characteristic of *dé* in human beings is the manifestation of tranquility and that developing *dé* involves the fourfold alignment.

I propose that the alignment concept is similar to the process of falling asleep. One cannot force one's self to fall sleep, nor can one consciously try to fall asleep, rather one must mirror or align with the state of sleep by creating the physical and mental conditions that enable sleep to emerge. That is, when one is relaxed, lets go of conscious thought, and is not physically active, then sleep arrives of its own accord. The more one mirrors or aligns with the state of sleep, the more likely one is to fall asleep. Similarly, we find in verse 11 that the conditions of bodily alignment and a tranquil, or ordered mind are necessary for *dé* to arrive or be present in a person (Roth, 1999). One cannot demand or expect its presence; it simply emerges. One can only create the conditions under which it will arrive. As we know, however, aligning one's self physically and mentally with the state of sleep is not sleep. One must also observe the phenomenon of sleep, the benefits of sleep, and the consequences of sleep deprivation to gain an understanding of what sleep is and the role it plays in a person's life. To this end, I now examine how to cultivate tranquility, followed by a consideration of the outcomes of according with *dao*.

### **Inner Cultivation and Physical Tranquillity**

The body plays a critically important role in the cultivation process. As noted above, being aligned physically and mentally precedes being tranquil. The interconnectedness of the physical to the ethereal is a very important concept



where the physical is the beginning point of cultivation in the *Neiye*. In fact, the role of the physical and its connection to *dao* is continued from prior to the time of the writing of the *Neiye* through to later Daoist thinking. Lai (2003), quoting a fifth century Daoist text, the *Scripture of Inner Explanation of the Three Heavens*, states: “A dead prince is not worth a live rat” (p. 280) emphasizing the importance of life. From the *Baopuzi* a Daoist text of the fourth century we have: “The *dao* is not far off; it is here in my body” (Wang, as cited in Lai, 2003, p. 258). “Daoism situates the power of the *dao* in the reality closest to us, most importantly in our own physical bodies” (Lai, 2003, p. 280).

The framework of inner cultivation is broadly based on five interrelated and overlapping concepts: 1) the physical world and how we experience it in our everyday lives, 2) *qi*, vital energy, 3) *jing*, vital essence, 4) *dé* and 5) *dao*. In general, these concepts represent in broad terms an integration of the physical and the ethereal, yet each concept contains an element of the other in a holographic sense. For example, just as the DNA of a given cell contains the instructions for the complete organism, each of the five entities listed above contains, in varying degrees, the presence and/or potential of all the others. So, the physical world contains, *qi*, *jing*, *dé*, and *dao*, but it appears as physical to those who have not cultivated. Put another way, the physical world is a manifestation of *dao* through *dé* and the other elements of *qi* and *jing* (vital essence).

In the *Neiye*, the concepts whereby the physical is connected to the ethereal—*qi* and *jing* (vital essence)—are important because they comprise the

basis for inner cultivation. According to the *Neiye*, the physical conditions that establish precedence for mental tranquility are the following:

- “Being seated in a stable position with erect spine erect and limbs aligned or squared up with one another” (Roth, 1999, p.110);
- “Relaxed, expanded and tranquil breathing” (Roth, 1999, p.111&114);
- “Revolving” or regular circulation of the vital breath” (*qi*) (Roth, 1999, p.111)

It appears the authors of the *Neiye* anticipate that the establishment of a given state (for example physical alignment) enables the presence of *dé* to emerge or be augmented, thereby deepening the efficacy of one’s physical alignment and enabling movement into the next step of alignment such as a tranquil mind.

Therefore, aligning one’s self with the manifestation of *dao* in the physical form invites *dé* to inhere physically and as such is a positive feedback system. As proposed earlier in this chapter perhaps this is another reason why there appears to be circularity in the description of the relationship of *dao* and *dé*.

## **Inner Cultivation and Mental Tranquillity**

According to Roth (1999), the physical practice must be assisted with a process of cleaning out the mind or establish(ing) a certain quality of mind that is the basis for experiencing the Way. He elaborated as follows:

- “Empty out normal contents of conscious experience, the emotions, desires thoughts and perceptions” (p.113);

- “Thinking is also an impediment to attaining the well-ordered mind, particularly when it becomes excessive” (p.114), and
- “You clean out the lodging place of the numinous mind” (p.118).

According to Roth (1999), this enables the following mental states or conditions:

- “You let go of the contents of your mind and become acutely sensitive” (p. 111);
- “You can become concentrated on the one thing, perhaps the One of verse 24” (p.111), and
- “You return to the natural state of equanimity or tranquility” (p.113).

To Roth (1999), the state of mind is an outcome of cultivation where the “numinous mind” emerges “into the cultivated, the stable, the excellent, the concentrated, the aligned mind, the abode that has been ‘diligently cleaned out’ through the aligning of the body and breathing” (p. 113). This state of mind represents the unity of *dao* and the individual’s innate nature. More will be said in chapter six about the significance of innate nature.

The final and important step in cultivation while sitting and following the acquisition of a tranquil state of mind and the arrival of the *dao* in the mind, one must hold on to it. This is not an easy task as suggested by Roth (1999):

- “Maintaining the One appears to be a meditative technique in which the adept concentrates on nothing but the Way or some representation of it” (p.116), and

- “Holding fast to the One entails retaining a sense or a vision of the Way as the one unifying force within phenomenal reality while seeing this reality in all its complexity” (p.116).

Continuing with the mirroring concept, one might conclude that *dao* and its *dé* are constantly present and a concentrated awareness.

### **Inner Cultivation and Awareness**

The *Neiye* holds that *dao* is always present, but people who do not cultivate tranquility and virtue are not aware of its presence. Further, it holds that there is a numinous mind within the mind that emerges into awareness of those who cultivate and is not available to those who do not. With respect to the mind, the outcome of the meditative process appears to be the following:

- “The Way can come to abide within it [the mind]” (Roth, 1999, p.103);
- “You can maintain the one and discard the myriad disturbances” (Roth, 1999, p.115);
- “It [the Way] is experienced as a nondual numinous awareness that precedes words and lies deep within the mind within the mind” (Roth, 1999, p.117);
- “Once you have achieved an awareness of the Way, you can recall the word Way as a verbal symbol or image of the Way facilitating mental concentration and awareness of the Way” (Roth, 1999, p.117);
- “You are released by the Way from the temporal, spatial, and individual human confines” (Roth, 1999, p.117), and

- “After being released, you inevitably return to the dualistic world, but retain a sense of your union with the Way” (Roth, 1999, p. 118).

This describes the emergence or arrival of the numinous mind within the mind and the consequences of its arrival. One is able to maintain connection to the ineffable *dao* and maintain a harmonious and undisturbed mind. You are able to better connect to the *dao* by recalling the word *dao*; you are released from the confines of daily life. You live in the world while maintaining a connection with the *dao*.

### **Inner Cultivation and Outcomes in Daily Life**

The last statement suggests that the practitioner takes this experience into daily life, which is consistent with the idea that inner cultivation is a holistic practice.

The *Neiye* describes the activities, practices, and emotions one carries out daily to help maintain *dao* and those that cause deviation from the path. However, the text largely addresses the matter of contemplation and the desirable states of mind one must cultivate and it is not always clear whether the instructions address only contemplative practices or whether this applies to desirable mental states during normal daily life. There are, however, sections of the text that clearly speak to daily life.

Verse three states that equanimity is the true condition of the mind that will be attained “if you are able to cast off sorrow, happiness, joy, anger, desire, and profit-seeking” (Roth, 1999, p. 50). The emotions in this statement could be experienced in a contemplative state, but profit seeking is something one does in daily life. One could argue that emotions arise out of daily life experiences and

therefore, these statements apply to both meditative and daily states of mind. Verse 20 appears to focus exclusively on daily life with its warnings about the deleterious impacts on one's vitality of deep thinking, idleness, cruelty, arrogance, worry, grief, and excessive eating (Roth, 1999). Verse 23 is primarily dedicated to the impact of over or under eating—both of which are not beneficial to one's vitality (Roth, 1999). Verse 22 provides antidotes to anger, worry, and anxiety in the form of poetry, music, and the rites that are activities conducted in daily life presumably outside of a meditative practice (Roth, 1999). An important point here is that while meditative practice is important in cultivating *dao*, the text alludes to daily activities one should do to support and enable tranquility in the meditative state.

### **Inner Cultivation—Emotions and Emergence**

Ten of the 26 verses address issues of emotions and thoughts either in contemplation or in daily practice and generally propose a life of moderation consistent with heaven, earth, and man's guiding principles of alignment, equanimity, and tranquility respectively. Verse 17 states "Chase away the excessive; abandon the trivial" (Roth, 1999, p. 78). Verse 15 emphasizes the importance and priority of states of mind in daily life (Roth, 1999). It states that those with unimpaired minds keep their bodies unimpaired and do not encounter disasters or harm. Roth noted a fourfold alignment to inner cultivation consisting of the body, the four limbs, the breath, and the mind. I suggest adding a fifth alignment consisting of one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviour in daily life. That is, in daily life, one's state of mind and emotions should be tranquil and

one's actions should be in accord with *dé*.

In addition and importantly, there appears to be a recursive relationship or an emergence of *dao* from meditative practice that feeds into daily life. I have already noted that profit seeking is not helpful to developing equanimity or a tranquil mind. Therefore, I assume that it is not in alignment with *dao*. But, it is interesting to note that verse 24 says “when your body is calm and unmoving, and you can maintain the One and discard the myriad disturbances,” you will not be enticed by profit nor frightened by harm (Roth, 1999, p.92). I interpret this to mean that the meditative practice enables an unselfconscious emergence of *dao* into one's daily life, resulting in a natural change of one's behaviour and attitudes in daily life. The concept of providing the conditions that permits the natural emergence of human attributes consistent with or aligned with *dao* in one's life is an important theme throughout the *Neiye* appearing in seven of the 26 verses and mentioned on 12 occasions. An example of this can be found in verse 13 where lines one, six, and seven stated:

There is a numinous [mind] naturally residing within;

Diligently clean out its lodging place

And its vital essence will naturally arrive. (Roth, 1999, p.70)

## **Inner Cultivation Process Summary**

Given the preceding discussion I present a summary or sketch of the process below:

- Conscious alignment of one's self physically with *dao* by sitting and breathing according to the instructions enables physical attributes of *dé* to emerge, enabling deeper physical stillness and a mental tranquility to arrive enabling;
- Conscious alignment of the mind with *dao* whereby one empties the mind of emotions, desires, thoughts, distractions, enabling greater expression of mental attributes of *dé* to emerge and deeper mental tranquility enabling;
- Further conscious alignment with *dao* whereby a concentrated awareness on *dao*, enables "the numinous mind" attributes of *dé* to emerge and a deeper awareness of *dao* enabling;
- A more complete emergence of *dao* in one's life whereby one's being—including one's health, behaviour, desires, and circumstances—become aligned with *dao*, thereby maintaining conscious presence of *dao* in one's life and one's daily cultivation.

I conclude that cultivation of *dao* or returning to *dao* is achieved by aligning one's self with tranquility, the Daoist guiding principle of humans. This is achieved through aligning one's self in contemplative practice and daily life physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually with this principle and it is a process that both uses and develops *dé*. It appears that one of a number of natural emergences from this process is a transformation of one's character in alignment with *dao*, which appears on the surface as character virtues. For example, as I have noted, the text states that an indication of successful cultivation is that one naturally will not seek profit nor fear harm. In terms of



character virtues, we might interpret that the virtuous person is courageous and not motivated by greed. It is important to note that this virtuous behaviour is not a self-conscious decision. Rather, it is, according to the text, an emergence of behaviour that is in alignment with the principle of *dao* due to the inherence of *dao* in one's chest.

### **Distinguishing Between Self-conscious and Emergent Unself-conscious Virtue**

The first two lines of the section titled *dé* in Chapter 38 of the *Daodejing* articulate the significant difference between an emergent virtuous behaviour and self-conscious virtuous behaviour. There are many translations and interpretations of the *Daodejing*. I rely on Wing Tsit Chan's version (1963) and Wang Bi's (229-249 BCE) commentary on the *Daodejing* translated by Lynn (1999). Below I provide Chan's (1963) translation of the first and second lines of Chapter 38 followed by salient sections of Wang's commentary on the lines:

*Daodejing* Chapter 38 line one:

The person of superior virtue is not (conscious of) their virtue, and in this way they really possess virtue. (Chan, 1963, p.167)

Wang comments:

The person of superior virtue only functions if it is with the *dao*. They do not regard their virtue as virtue, never hold on to it nor makes use of it. Thus they are able to have virtue, and nothing fails to be done. They attain it without seeking it and fulfill it without conscious effort. Thus

although they have virtue, they do not have a reputation for “virtue.”  
(Lynn, 1999, p.120).

*Daodejing* Chapter 38 line two:

The person of inferior virtue never loses (sight of) their virtue, and in this way they lose their virtue. (Chan, 1963, p.167)

Wang (as cited in Lynn, 1999) comments:

The person of inferior virtue attains it by seeking it and fulfills it with conscious effort, then they establish goodness as the way to keep people in order. Thus a reputation for “virtue” is acquired by them. If one tries to attain it by seeking it, they will surely suffer the loss of it. If they try to fulfill it by making conscious effort, they will surely fail at it. (p.120)

I believe this is consistent with the preceding analysis of the *Neiye*. In this light, I interpret the first line to say that the highest (character) virtue emerges unselfconsciously as a consequence of cultivation; therefore, it truly is an emergence of *dé*, the manifestation of the *dao* in humans. And, the second line, I believe, describes self-conscious acts of virtue that are not an expression of *dé* because they are self-conscious and *dao* does nothing self-consciously nor for self-benefit.

Appearing to be virtuous without being virtuous was a concern among literate Chinese during the fourth to second century BCE and it continues to be a concern of current proponents of virtue ethics who place the individual at the center of moral decision making (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006). The *Wuxing* and its

commentary (fourth century BCE) are recently discovered texts that shed light on this debate, early Chinese thought, and other documents of that era such as the *Neiye* and the *Daodejing* (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006). The *Wuxing*, aligned with *Mencius*' thinking, develops an embodied moral psychology in response to "critiques of the hypocritical and self-serving nature of Ru (Confucian) ceremony and learning" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006, p. 67). To address this concern the *Wuxing* proposed "once cultivated, the virtues manifest themselves through physiological changes in the body that may be observed by others" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006, p. 6).

The approach to the development of virtue in the *Wuxing* differs from the *Neiye* in that it is based on cognitively evaluating affective response. That is: "states of the inner mind: anxiety, wisdom, and joy lead to: insight into, attainment of, and giving form to virtue" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006, p. 74). While the body does not appear to play the foundational role in the development of virtue in the *Wuxing* as it does in the *Neiye*, the virtues are seen as grounded in the body and the body is important in evaluating whether the virtues are unconsciously or consciously expressed. Of particular interest in this respect were the eyes and complexion of the forehead. The eyes of a virtuous person were thought to be bright like jade and the forehead had the lustre of jade—both indicating the presence of a strong and good quality of *qi* (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006). Literate Chinese at that time concerned themselves with the question of whether a person acted virtuously unselfconsciously or self-consciously and both considered the body important: Those who were proponents of the *Neiye* viewed

it as central to the cultivation of virtue while those who were proponents of the *Wuxing* viewed it as the foundation of virtues and important in demonstrating the sincerity of the one's virtues.

The emergence of unselfconscious character virtues is not the only outcome of inner cultivation. The *Neiye* outlines the personal, circumstantial, social, and spiritual benefits of those who have attained *dao*. From a personal perspective, you will be healthy, have great vitality, you will be able to mirror things with great clarity, and your perception and understanding will be great (Roth, 1999). Your “skin will be ample and smooth, . . . eyes and ears will be acute and clear, . . . muscles will be supple and their bones will be strong (Roth, 1999, p, 76). You will have long life, return to your innate nature, see profit and not be attracted to it, you will perceive harm and not be afraid, and you will delight in your own person (Roth, 1999).

With respect to your circumstance, social experiences, and your influence on others: “exemplary persons act upon things and are not acted upon them because they grasp the guiding principle of the One” (Roth, 1999, p. 62). “With a well-ordered mind within you, (w)ell-ordered words issue from your mouth, (a)nd well-ordered tasks are imposed upon others” (Roth, 1999, p.64). You will have good fortune; you will not be exposed to disasters and will not be harmed (Roth, 1999). “It will be known in your countenance, and seen in your skin colour . . . Others will be kinder to you than your own brethren” (Roth, 1999, p.80). With respect to spiritual benefits: “you will return to the Way and its *dé*” (Roth, 1999, p. 78); “you can rely on and take counsel from it [the Way]” (Roth, 1999, p.5), and

“the far off will seem close at hand” (Roth, 1999, p.82). I conclude that the process of engaging in cultivation as proposed in the *Neiye* results in a greater emergence of *dao* in all aspects of one’s life. The cultivation or return to the *dao* results in a nourishment of one’s life and a sense of receiving gifts of enhanced capacity or power, manifesting (*dé*) in all human aspects of being including more excellent and ordered forms of physical well-being (better health and longevity), thinking and emotional well-being (unselfconscious practice of the virtues, wisdom development and a return to a stable innate nature), social well-being (you will not be harmed by others, you will be protected from disaster), and contribution to society through influence on others, (you will be able to manifest the Way in the world).

The ability of virtuous people (sages) to influence others’ behaviour is a unique aspect of the ancient Chinese concept of virtue noted in chapter four. Roth (1999) observed that this concept is clearly articulated in the *Neiye* and elaborated on in a later text—the *Huainanzi* dating from the second century BCE. The ability of the sage to influence others is enabled through a resonance of the sage with people and objects around him or her, and it is achieved without deliberate intention, presumably because the sage has directly experienced the guiding principle of all phenomena (Roth, 1999).

## **Ethics Education: Insights**

The *Neiye* has much to say about the process of developing a pre-reflective state of mind, which might be useful in developing pedagogy for secular virtue education. The concepts that I believe are instructive are:

### **1. Emergence**

The critical importance of creating the conditions of tranquil body, emotions, and thoughts that enable the emergence of *dé* (virtue). This approach stands in sharp contrast to usual pedagogy, which attempts to intentionally train specific cognitive abilities such as reading, writing, and arithmetic through exercises directed at these skills. The concept of emergence assumes that, if the conditions are right, an innate knowledge and ability with respect to *dé* (virtue) will appear of its own accord.

### **2. Tranquility: Body and Emotions**

Unlike usual pedagogy, the body is assumed to play a critical role in providing a foundation for tranquility in the process of contemplation; Emotions play an important role as well in that they must be settled or levelled as a means of enhancing states of mental tranquility.

### **3. Daily Practice of the Virtues**

It is important to consciously know and practice virtues daily as a means of contributing to emotional and mental tranquility.

One might conclude that secular education's focus on ethical reasoning and practicing a defined set of skills and behaviours, addresses only the fourth

and, from a Daoist perspective, surface aspect of virtue. The Daoist approach suggests that in order to develop a natural and unselfconscious practice of ethics requires a pedagogy that addresses the whole being.

In chapter four, emotions, innate nature, mind, and tranquility were identified as interlinking factors in the cultivation process. The *Neiye* addresses in-depth emotions, tranquility, and emergence. According to the *Neiye*, one must return to one's innate nature, but the significance of this concept is not developed in any great detail. The mind is addressed in the sense that it must be cleaned out (part of achieving tranquility) and it must be concentrated to achieve union with the *dao*. The *Huainanzi*, considered in the next chapter, devotes considerable attention to the dyad of innate nature and emotions, expands significantly on the role of the mind and adds nuances to the concept of tranquility.

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## Discovering Tranquillity

While I was writing chapter five, I struggled to understand the ruling principle of human beings' tranquillity. The text states:

For human beings the ruling principle is to be tranquil.

Pleasure and anger, accepting and rejection are the devices of human beings.

Therefore the sage:

Alters with the seasons but doesn't transform,

Shifts with things but doesn't change places with them (Roth, 1999, p. 58).

The above verse may be summarized as saying that the ruling principle of human beings is to be tranquil, or to be in equilibrium in spite of the vagaries of life. I had always envisioned that tranquillity was something achieved at the top of a mountain or in some quiet place such as a monastery or a meditation retreat where there are no distractions. The principle of achieving tranquillity in the presence of the vagaries of life didn't make sense to me at all, until I came across a paragraph from my daughter's molecular biology text. It says:

All types of cells have their distinctive metabolic traits, and they cooperated extensively in the normal state, as well as in response to stress and starvation. One might think that the whole system would need to be so finely balanced that any minor upset such as a temporary change

in dietary intake, would be disastrous. In fact, the metabolic balance of a cell is amazingly stable. Whenever the balance is perturbed, the cell reacts so as to restore the initial state. The cell can adapt and continue to function during starvation or disease. Mutations of many kinds can damage or even eliminate particular metabolism pathways, and yet provided that certain minimum requirements are met – the cell survives. It does so because an elaborate network of control mechanisms regulates and coordinates the rates of all of its reactions. Thus one of the amazing features of cell biology is its ability to maintain a state of equilibrium in the face of dramatic external differences and changes. (Alberts, Johnson, Lewis, Raff, Roberts, & Walter, 2002, p. 108)

It appears that cells work, in the face of dramatic change in their environment, to maintain equilibrium or homeostasis. After reading the account of what cells do, I saw that the maintenance of equilibrium was neither impossible nor some mystical end goal. How had the ancients intuited that this kind of tranquility or equanimity was the ruling principle of human beings? Tranquility as equilibrium is certainly the ruling principle at the cellular level, and so it makes sense to me that it is the ruling principle at all levels of what it means to be human. The *Neiye* doesn't rule out the fact that humans live in a world of challenges and vagaries, just as cells survive in a constantly changing environment. It does counsel, however, that in the presence of change one must maintain tranquility and equanimity.

In the introduction to the thesis (chapter one), I mentioned the sense of calm and lightness I felt after my first lesson, which prompted me to continue learning despite my doubts. Since that time, I have experienced deeper tranquility both in practice and outside of practice. I didn't connect these experiences to the descriptions in the *Neiye* until I came to the understanding enabled by reading my daughter's biology text.



It is difficult to articulate personal contemplative experiences such as tranquility, but perhaps an imperfect way to describe these tranquil experiences is that they have an oceanic quality to them. It is as if you are at the beach looking out over the ocean. It is calm where you are but the ocean waves and wind can be wild and blowing but you are somehow aware of this, connected and calm.

Sometimes a quality of this sense is carried over into daily life. This does not prevent problems from arising but somehow they do not seem to have the bite or urgency they do in a normal state of consciousness, and often, but not always, they are resolved quickly without fuss. From my reading of the *Neiye* and my personal experience, I assume the goal in Daoist practice is to achieve a state of tranquillity at all times.



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## CHAPTER 6 CULTIVATION OF VIRTUOUS LEADERS

### ACCORDING TO THE *HUAINANZI* 淮南子

#### Preamble

This chapter advances the work of chapters four and five where Daoist contemplative practices for developing virtue articulated in the *Neiye* were considered. The *Neiye* provides instruction for individual cultivation of *dé* while the *Huainanzi* builds on the *Neiye* in terms of understanding contemplative practices and focusing attention on how these practices are fundamental to good leadership. As such, the language and examples contained in the *Neiye* give attention to internal physiological and psychological processes while the *Huainanzi* adds to these concepts and provides examples of how leaders who develop *dé* as suggested in the *Neiye* may succeed as leaders. This perspective is useful because the purpose of this thesis is to inform ethics education of business leaders. Later in this chapter, I discuss how *dé* and ethics are related.

The *Huainanzi*, while concise, is encyclopaedic and “designed to survey the entire body of knowledge required for a contemporary monarch to rule successfully and well” (Major, Queen, Meyer, & Roth, 2010, p. 1). My concern was specifically to obtain insights regarding the cultivation of a leader’s *dé*. To address this, I utilized the four components identified by Chan (2010) involved in the cultivation of virtuous sages as a means to focus my attention in the review of the *Huainanzi*. This chapter therefore investigates the concept of innate nature and its relationship to emotions, the mind, and additional nuances on tranquility

that did not appear in the *Neiye*. The chapter concludes with further insights that might apply to business ethics pedagogy.

### **Innate Nature and Emotions According to the *Huainanzi***

Macroscopically, the cosmos is infused with the *dao* and is governed by great patterns (*li*), which define the typical ways in which things interact. At a microcosmic level, all things are infused with the Way and contain a “unique innate nature (*xing*), which determines their course of development and actions” (Roth, 2010a, p.43). When stimulated by external events, the mind responds with (*qing*)—an emotion which is thought of as a movement originating in the mind-body matrix and which results in a “sound or physical expression such as laughing and dancing in the case of joy or screaming or fleeing in the case of fear” (Meyer, 2010, p. 884). Innate nature and emotion are closely related; the *Huainanzi* “does not clearly distinguish between a particular instance of emotional response and the inborn disposition from which it arises” (Meyer, 2010, p. 884). Innate nature, however, is a foundation out of which emotions arise. The *Huainanzi* described the origin of our innate nature. It states: “Our nature and destiny emerge from the Ancestor together with our bodily shapes. Once these shapes are completed, our nature and destiny develop; once our nature and destiny develop, likes and dislikes arise” (Roth, 2010a, p. 73). Further, the importance of innate nature is emphasized:

Now consider the myriad things of this world, even spiders and wasps that creep and crawl. All know what they like and dislike, what brings them benefit and harm. Why? Because they are constantly guided by their

natures. If it were to suddenly leave them, their bones and flesh would have no constant guide. (Roth, 2010a, p. 75)

Without our innate nature, there is no guide. However, the term guide may be interpreted that innate nature provides the instinctual and physical biological definition that guides humans and creatures. The following elaborates on why it is important for people to return to their innate nature, which is more than instinct and biology:

What I call “to realize it yourself” means to fulfill your own person. To fulfill your own person is to become unified with the way (Roth, 2010a, p. 72).

What I am calling “realization” means realizing the innate tendencies of nature and destiny and resting securely in the calmness that it produces (Roth, 2010a, p. 73).

It appears that innate nature is the foundation of the embodied self, which is fundamental and very important in the process of self-cultivation. Realizing or knowing one’s innate nature means fulfilling one’s self, resulting in a calmness and contentment with one’s self. Realizing one’s innate nature paradoxically also means unification with and realizing the *dao* whereby one gains a broader understanding and connection with the universe (Roth, 2010a). I discuss this in detail later, but it is a significant outcome, worth underlining in the present context that, in realizing the integration of one’s self and the *dao*, one’s behaviour is guided by the genuine responses of the authentic self and the *dao*, which results in enhanced ethical behaviour.



Through a process of returning to the uniqueness and particularity of who we truly are, that is, our genuine selves, we return to *dao*, which encompasses the universe (Roth & Meyer, 2010b). We become more ethical because we are guided by our authentic selves. Returning to one's innate nature is mentioned once in verse 22 of the *Neiye* where it proposes that this nature will become constant and stable within (Roth, 1999).

The concept is more fully developed in the *Huainanzi* where its importance cannot be overstated. The first eight chapters of the text discuss the root of the philosophy, while the next 12 chapters address applications of the philosophy and are known branch chapters (Major et al., 2010). The first chapter titled *Originating in the Way* addresses the most fundamental aspects of the entire text such as the concept of *dao*. Given the elaboration, attention, and emphasis given to the matter of returning to one's innate nature it can be concluded that it is an important vital root concept. Significantly, the process for its achievement is fully developed in the second root chapter titled *Activating the Genuine* (Major et al., 2010).

If innate nature is so important that one must return to it, why and what draws one away from it? All humans depart from their innate nature because their spirits are stimulated through perception of external phenomenon which gives rise to desires and preferences. The *Huainanzi* stated:

That which is tranquil from our birth is our heavenly nature. Stirring only after being stimulated, our nature is harmed. When things arise the spirit responds, and this is the activity of perception. When perception meets

things preferences arise. When preferences take shape and perception is enticed by external things, our nature cannot return to the self, and the heavenly patterns are destroyed (Roth, 2010a, p. 53).

Here emotions and desires capture one's perception and attention and disturb one's tranquility and distancing one from one's innate nature, and ultimately the *dao*. The text provided an example:

Now setting up bells and drums, lining up wine and string instruments, spreading out felt mats and cushions, hanging up banners and ivory carvings, the ears listening to the licentious court music from the last Shang Capital region, presenting beauties of elegant complexion, setting up wine and passing around goblets all night into the next morning, powerful crossbows shooting at high flying birds, running dogs chasing crafty hares: all these may bring you contentment, consume you with a blazing passion, and to lust after them. But when you unhitch the chariot, rest the horses, stop the wine, and halt the music,

Your heart suddenly feels as if it is in mourning,

And you are as depressed as if you had a great loss.

What is the reason for this? [it is]

Because you do not use what is intrinsic to bring contentment to what is extrinsic but rather, use what is extrinsic to bring contentment to what is intrinsic. So when the music is playing, you are happy, but when the songs end, you are sad.

Sadness and happiness revolving generate one another;

Your Quintessential Spirit becomes chaotic and defensive and cannot get a moment's rest.

If you examine the reasons for this, you cannot grasp their shapes, yet every day because of this, you injure your vitality and neglect your deepest realizations.

For therefore, if you do not realize the intrinsic [nature] that lies within you, then you will bestow your natural endowment [of Quintessential Spirit] on external things and use it to falsely adorn yourself. (Roth, 2010a, p. 70)

Summarizing, just as humans are given an innate nature, they are naturally drawn to external phenomena, which gives rise to preferences that distance or draw them away from their innate nature. Therefore, leaders who focus on external phenomenon as a means of achieving contentment fail as it generates emotional highs and lows that drain one's *qi*.

Three subjects on the matter of returning to one's innate nature deserve further discussion. The first is the concept of the self and perfection of the self, the second is the idea that the universe can be accessed through the particular, and the third is the role of emotions in this process. Both concepts of particular and the universe are linked in Chinese thought to a philosophical understanding that stands apart from western thinking in important ways (Hall & Ames 1998). From a western perspective, the self is a separate, autonomous, distinct, individual defined in terms of "(1) rational consciousness, (2) physiological

reduction, (3) volitional activity, or (4) biological functioning” and according to this definition, some western philosophers consider the Chinese to be selfless (Hall & Ames, 1998, p. 24). In the Chinese way of thinking however, the individual is unique in the sense “of a single and unsubstitutable particular such as a work of art” (Hall & Ames, 1998, p. 25). The unique individual, however, is irreducibly connected to a social and historical context, which precludes the sense of autonomous individuality found in the west. Nonetheless, it does not rule out the uniqueness that can be expressed in social roles and relationships or in the individual’s responsibility to carry on life from ancestors in their own unique way (Hall & Ames, 1998). Therefore, there is a unique self in the Chinese way of thinking and much has been dedicated to how to cultivate the genuine and excellent self in both Confucian and Daoist thought.

With respect to the concept of accessing the universe through the particular, as discussed in Chapter four, “whenever any being or thing perfectly embodies the Way (*dao*) in space and time, its unique Potency (*dé*) is on display” (Meyer, 2010, p. 872). This statement expresses the unity of the *dao*, formless and all-encompassing, and the perfection of the unique particular individual when the *dao* is fully embodied. When the unique individual cultivates his or her *dé*, they are engaged in a process of returning to the *dao*. Cultivation of *dé* is achieved through the exercises outlined in the *Neiye* and, for those who reach perfection, their “innate nature is merged with the Way” (Roth, 2010c, p. 248). In this sense, cultivation is not about becoming formless and disappearing into the void, rather it is about becoming aware of and returning to the unique individuality

that is one's *dao* given innate nature. In so doing, one merges with the *dao* and gains the wide perspective of the *dao* and the benefits that this entails. These benefits are similar to those articulated in the *Neiye*. When you return to the world of dualities: "your sense perceptions are always clear and accurate; your emotions are always calmed; and you rest in harmony amid the turmoil of the world; . . . (you) are able to avoid the pitfalls of the physical body" (Meyer & Roth, 2010b, p. 235).

What role do emotions play in the process of moving towards excellence and virtue? *Qing* or emotion at its "most basic meaning in the *Huainanzi* is feeling." However, it goes beyond feeling to include "emotional responses, dispositional responsiveness, genuine responses, instinctive responses, disposition, true or genuine or essential qualities" (Meyer, 2010, p. 883). Emotions are thought to be "irreducible elements of the human condition from birth and any characteristic that is original to and inseparable from a particular phenomenon may be described as *qing*" (Meyer, 2010, p. 884). Emotions arise from a response to external phenomenon, are indicative of innate nature, and therefore play a positive role. However, the emotional response results in the development of preferences for the phenomenon of the external world, which then separates the individual from that which is intrinsic and internal to their authentic selves. Chapter four observed that emotions are related to *qi* because they involve movement. Recall the following observation:

at a higher conceptual level, the movement of *qi* remains vital to cosmic and human flourishing. Although it is true that the arousal of affectivity will

inevitably upset the stability of *xing*, (innate nature) it cannot be argued that the Daoist remedy lies in cutting off the capacity of *qing* (emotions) [as this would] amount to extinguishing the flow of *qi* and (be) suicidal. (Chan, 2010, p. 11)

The *Huainanzi* therefore, holds that it is important to be aware of one's emotions because it reveals one's innate nature. At the same time, it requires that one maintain tranquility in the presence of these emotions to cultivate *dé*.

### **The Mind According to the *Huainanzi***

The use of the phrase heart-mind or mind for the translation of the Chinese word *xin* does not capture its full meaning. The character for mind in Chinese is an image of a heart reflecting a unitary concept of mind and body, which extends beyond the western understanding of mind and body. The body in the *Huainanzi* conception is infused with life animating *qi*, which is information, matter, and energy. By way of example, the heart is not just an organ that moves blood throughout the body, but also is a certain kind of *qi* that coordinates and regulates the *qi*, physiological, and emotional function of all the other organs (Meyer, 2010). There is an understanding in Chinese thought that all organs have not only a physical function but also an emotional function and while the heart 'controls' the other organs, emotions experienced in the other organs can influence the heart (Meyer, 2010). What sets the heart apart from the other organs is its ability to "think and thus perceive its own activity" (Meyer, 2010, p. 901).

According to the *Huainanzi*, the spirit, mind, and body, are inextricably linked, depend on one another, and neglect of any leads to damage to the person (Roth, 2010a, p. 70). Spirit and mind are integrated with awareness and consciousness. The text states, “humans contain a supply of quintessential spirit, the essential vital energy of the spirit, which is the most important foundation of consciousness” (Roth, 2010a, p. 70) and “spirit (is) the basis of consciousness which in turn is the storehouse of the mind. Importantly, while the spirit is preeminent, the mind holds a fundamental and critical role in all aspects of one’s being and in realizing one’s innate nature (Roth, 2010a, p. 71). The text summarizes the relationship of spirit, mind, vital energy, and phenomenon as follows: “Sages experience them (external phenomenon) but not so much so as to dominate their quintessential spirit or to disrupt their vital energy and concentration or cause their minds to be enticed away from their true nature” (Roth, 2010a, p. 72).

“The mind’s tendency to be stable and calm is disrupted by desires caused by the senses engagement with the many various objects of the world” (Roth, 2010b, p. 81). In the context of a discussion on how to live a long life amidst the vagaries, of the life which have the potential to exhaust one’s body and spirit, the *Huainanzi* said: “In the use of their mind, sages lean on their natures and rely on their spirits. They [nature and spirit] sustain each other, and [so sages] attain their ends and beginnings” (Roth & Meyer, 2010a, p. 87). Therefore, while the mind is enabled by spirit, it has agency in the sense that it can express will. With respect to self-cultivation and developing *dé*, the role of

will is to be responsive to external circumstances while maintaining awareness of innate nature; the guide for living.

Chapter seven of the *Huainanzi* provides advice on self-cultivation and its benefits (Roth, 2010c). The conclusion of the chapter considers five princes who, rather than holding on to their innate nature, pursue external affairs with negative consequences (Roth, 2010c). This story illustrates the role of the mind and will. One prince, the Duke of Xian, for example: “was besotted by the beauty of Lady Li and created chaos for four generations” (Roth, 2010c, p. 260). The *Huainanzi* concludes:

If these five princes had matched their genuine responses to the situation and relinquished what they did not really need, if they had taken their inner selves as their standard and not run after external things, how could they have possibly arrived at such disasters?

Thus,

In archery, it is not the arrow that fails to hit the center of the target; it is the one who studies archery who does not guide the arrow. (Roth, 2010c, p.260)

The mind can choose whatever it wishes. However, according to the text, the most important choice a leader can make is to cultivate the mind such that it is able to follow the standard provided by one’s innate nature.

The *Huainanzi* elaborates on the role and importance of the mind in this process. First, it is acknowledged that everyone is drawn by the same external



worldly attractions: “The instinctive responses are the same in everyone, but some penetrate to spirit-like illumination, and some cannot avoid derangement and madness” (Roth & Meyer, 2010a, p. 101). In order to know one’s innate nature and return to your ‘self’ one must penetrate the teachings of the techniques of the mind described in the *Neiye*. Just as the *Neiye* emphasizes the importance of tranquility so too did the *Huainanzi*:

The spirit is the source of consciousness. If the spirit is clear, then consciousness is illumined.

Consciousness is the storehouse of the mind. If consciousness is impartial, then the mind is balanced.

No one can mirror himself in flowing water, but [he can] observe his reflection in standing water because it is still.

No one can view his form in raw iron, [he can] view his form in a clear mirror because it is even.

Only what is even and still can thus give form to the nature and basic tendencies of things. (Roth & Meyer, 2010a, p. 101)

The mind, while not the foundation of consciousness in Daoist thinking, is very important for two reasons. First, the mind has agency in the sense that it has the capability to make choices and express will. Second, one of the most important expressions of will is to choose to train the mind to achieve tranquility such that the individual is able to return to his or her innate nature. Effective leadership

thus is achieved through exerting the mind's will to achieve tranquility as proposed in the *Neiye*.

### **Nuances on Tranquility According to the *Huainanzi***

As stated earlier, Hall and Ames (1998) hold that tranquility is “not passivity but an ongoing, dynamic achievement of equilibrium” which “stands in a dominant relationship to agitation rather than excluding it utterly” (p. 49). Sages who have achieved this kind of tranquility serve as examples that help elaborate this concept:

Vast and empty, they are tranquil and without worry.

Great marshes may catch fire, but it cannot burn them.

Great rivers may freeze over, but it cannot chill them.

Great thunder may shake the mountains, but it cannot startle them.

Great storms may darken the sun, but it cannot harm them (Roth, 2010c, p. 249)

And

If you take the world lightly, then your spirit will have no attachments.

If you minimize the myriad things, then your mind will not be led astray.

If you equalize death and life, then your mentality will not be fearful.

If you take all alterations and transformations as [being] the same, then your clarity will not be darkened. (Roth, 2010c, p. 251)

Tranquility is not something achieved at the top of a mountain where it is quiet and no distractions are present. Rather, leaders achieve tranquility in the presence of and in the full knowledge of the vagaries of life, and its achievement enables the emergence of *dé* in one's life.

## **Ethics Pedagogy Insights**

The *Huainanzi* advocated that the most important action a leader can take is to engage in self-cultivation utilizing the inner training practices of the *Neiye*. This involves an embodied psychology that offers an explanation for the turn away from a self that was shaped by interaction with the external world and a return to the true self and *dé* (virtue). This return is enabled through cultivation of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual tranquility, which enables a return to the authentic self and simultaneously provides access to the universal. It appears that cultivation of tranquility enables a shift in perspective from a narrow self-motivated by lust, desires, and immediate responses to emotions to a broader self situated in an enhanced awareness of its relationship to the universe and as a consequence, a more ethical person and better leader. This investigation provides several insights in terms of ethics pedagogy for further consideration:

- The inner training or inner work proposed by the *Neiye* is necessary to become an effective leader;
- Embodied innate nature given at birth is the foundation of a self that is fundamental. A key objective of self-cultivation is to return to one's innate nature;

- The standard and guide for ethical behaviour is one's innate nature, the foundation out of which emotions arise, and which is unique to each individual. Innate nature is given by *qi* at birth which is a manifestation of the *dao*;
- Realizing or knowing one's innate nature means fulfilling one's self resulting in a calmness and contentment with one's self;
- Realizing one's innate nature paradoxically also means unification with and realizing the *dao* whereby one gains a broader understanding of and connection with the universe;
- People are naturally drawn to external phenomena, which results in the development of preferences and desires for the external and distancing them from their innate nature;
- People can return to their innate nature by cultivating physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual tranquility;
- Tranquility is not an escape from life. Rather, it is achieved in the presence of and in the full knowledge of the vagaries of life; and
- The achievement of tranquility enables the return to one's innate nature and the emergence of *dé* in one's life.

In chapter seven I will explore insights further from a psychological and neuroscience perspective and consider how they might be integrated in ethics pedagogy for business leaders.

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## **A Near Life Experience**

When I first started in the Simon Fraser University philosophy of education program, we were told by one of the faculty members teaching in the program that it was *philosophy as a lived experience*, and that we should expect to experience personal transformations. At the time, I didn't know what *lived philosophy* meant. Little did I anticipate what was to come!

Last summer I was riding my bicycle to UBC through the endowment lands when a dog suddenly ran in front of my bike. I went over the handlebars, and when I landed on the ground, I broke my left arm and right index finger. It took about an hour until the paramedics found me on the trails, and while I was lying there, on the ground, I was looking up at the skies through the tall green fir trees, and I saw an eagle circling. It was a beautiful day, the sky was blue, the trees were green and tall and reaching to the sky. This was a cathedral, a magical place! I blurted out: "I love camping!" People who had come upon me had stopped, and had been attending to me while I was waiting for the paramedics. They burst out laughing when I said that.

This was just the beginning of the entire sequence of experiences brought on by my accident. That fall I ended up with a very heavy workload, some of which was due to a scheduling error. The workload also felt like an accident. It felt like I was being tested. I was extremely busy working and studying, while physically recovering from the accident. I often wondered, "Why am I doing this?" I was also ruminating on the feeling that my accident was like a near death

experience, except I didn't nearly die. Never was there any possibility that I was going to die. Why did I have that feeling, then? I intuited that it was not a near death experience; rather, it was a near life experience. But this was only an intuition, and I had no way to confirm or verify this intuition. About that time, I happened to be reading Carl Jung's *The Essential Jung* (1983). Because I was so busy, I was taking books with me everywhere and reading whenever and wherever I got a chance. While I was in the doctor's office waiting for a final check up on my arm, I came across a passage in Jung, which provided a perspective on my experience.

Just as the human body is a museum, so to speak, of its phylogenetic history, so too is the psyche. We have no reason to suppose that the specific structure of the psyche is the only thing in the world that has no history outside its individual manifestations. Even the conscious mind cannot be denied a history reaching back at least 5000 years. It is only our ego-consciousness that has forever a new beginning and an early end. The unconscious psyche is not only immensely old; it is also capable of growing into an equally remote future. It moulds the human species and is just as much a part of it as the human body, which, through ephemeral in the individual, is collectively of immense age (Jung, 1983, p. 223-4).

It was as though Jung was talking about my intuition that I had experienced a near life experience due to my accident! I didn't come close to death. Rather, I came close to life in a way that was not normally experienced. The qualities that



gave it that sense perhaps were embedded in the observation of the qualities of good I experienced while lying on the ground looking at the blue sky and the eagle circling above. It was also in the gratitude I felt upon regaining consciousness after the operation, and in that sense of gratitude realizing that this came within from my body or the unconscious rather than as an expression of my conscious mind. It was in the sense of gratitude I felt for my wife, daughter, and family when they came to see me for the first time after my operation. It was in the sense of intuition I experienced, which told me that, while we were but a mere flash in the scheme of life and history, we as individuals, were the carriers of life in the true sense of the word. From this I intuited that it is our role, responsibility, obligation, duty, and purpose, to contribute to the support, betterment, expansion, preservation, learning, and wonder of life that transcends our ego and extends into the future and into the past.

As it happens, I had written a paper in 2010 entitled: *Nourishing life, the Daoist concept of virtue*. That paper is now chapters four and five of this thesis. In writing the paper, I was inspired by the Daoist's reverence for life in all forms and their claim that life is nourished and supported by virtue. What do the Daoists mean by life? Has this experience brought me near to life? As I said, yes, it did. Has it compelled me to peak beyond my ego-consciousness and perceive something entirely different? I think so, and if so, then the virtue contemplated by the Daoists is not the same as what I thought of as the everyday virtues such as courtesy, kindness, and care. Perhaps virtue impels

the Japanese nuclear workers to consciously and knowingly put their lives on the line to save others from radiation. Perhaps.

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## **CHAPTER 7: IS THERE A PLACE FOR CONTEMPLATION AND INNER WORK IN BUSINESS ETHICS EDUCATION?**

### **Preamble**

In this chapter, I consider what science has to say about contemplation and integrate those findings with the work of chapters two through six. Chapter two provided a conceptual justification for the application of virtue ethics in a secular setting as a modified form of emotional intelligence supported by contemplative practices. Emotions and their regulation were identified as vital for ethical development. Chapter three provided an account of the difficulties in delivering ethics education in business schools. I suggested that these challenges arose from the assumption that human moral decision making is predominately conscious and reason based. Because of the deep roots of this assumption in western science and philosophy, it was acknowledged that this orientation would be difficult to change. To address this scientific bent, recent neuroscience findings were presented, indicating that while reason plays an important role in moral development, unconscious processes and emotions play a much more significant role in moral behaviour. As a means of further addressing these difficulties, chapter three aimed to provide empirical support for virtue ethics in the form of emotional intelligence, which has been demonstrated to provide business benefits.

Daoist contemplative practices were broadly investigated in chapters four, five, and six for insights that might inform ethics education. In these chapters, I reinforced the importance of the unconscious and emotions and how contemplation and emotional intelligence development address unconscious processes to support the regulation of emotions, a critical objective of ethical development observed in earlier chapters. Chapter five examined the *Neiye*, where *Nei* 內 and *ye* 業 were translated as inward and training (Roth, 1999) and can also be thought of as inner work. It added the insight that ethical development could be enhanced through inner work that utilizes contemplative practices to create the conditions of tranquility in all human aspects of being including body, emotions, and mind. Chapter six emphasized the insights of chapter five and advocated that the most important activity a leader can do is to engage in the inner work outlined in the *Neiye*. It added the concept that achieving awareness of one's innate authentic self through contemplative exercises is important to ethical development.

An important finding of the review of Daoist inner work was that creating conditions of tranquility enables virtue to emerge from within the individual. The concept of emergence is similar to our everyday assumption, that when we experience minor cuts, strains, or injuries, we support healing by protecting the wound through rest or with a bandage and we expect that the body heals without our conscious knowledge of how healing occurs. That is, healing and transformation emerge given the right conditions. According to Daoists, this assumption however, does not negate the need to consciously know and practice

virtue. Nonetheless, it is an important part of developing virtue in Daoist thinking as expressed in the *Neiye* and *Huainanzi*.

This is a significant departure from traditional pedagogy, which intentionally trains specific cognitive abilities such as reading, writing, and arithmetic through exercises directed at these skills. The inner work espoused by Daoists might be thought of as an internal bottom up orientation to education while our usual educational approach might be thought of as an external top down approach; bottom up implying working with internal emotional and unconscious processes as a means of primarily acquiring knowledge about the self, while top down implies working with conscious and rational processes as a means of primarily acquiring knowledge external to the self.

The purpose of chapter seven is to demonstrate how this thesis can contribute to business ethics pedagogy by addressing two major goals. The first is to identify scientifically supported aspects of contemplative practices for application to business ethics pedagogy. The second is to consider how contemplative practices and aspects of developing emotional intelligence explicitly address inner work in ways not anticipated in the ethics pedagogy of Narvaez (2008a). The rationale for referencing Narvaez's model is provided below.

First, I note two caveats. With respect to the first goal, there is a limitation in relying on science in that for a long time western philosophy and science privileged reason and the conscious over the unconscious and emotions. The knowledge of the ancient ethics traditions has only just recently been

rediscovered by science. Second, science, which is reason based, has an inherent limitation in its ability to evaluate the ultimate purpose of ethics. As MacIntyre (1984) said: “Questions of ends are questions of values, and on values reason is silent; conflict between rival values cannot be rationally settled. Instead one must simply choose—between parties, classes, nations causes, ideals” (p. 26). Further, “reason is calculative; it can assess truths of fact and mathematical relations but nothing more. In the realm of practice, therefore it can speak only of means. About the ends, it must be silent” (p. 55). Thus, the use of science limits this inquiry and Narvaez’s (2010b) empirically based ethics pedagogy in two ways: first, science by its very nature is developmental and does not account for all phenomena, and second it cannot account for intrinsic moral values, the crux of ethics.

With these caveats in mind and an eye to possibilities beyond those proven or intimated by science, this chapter examines the following questions, in light of neuroscience, moral psychology, and other empirical studies:

First, do contemplative practices and aspects of EI contribute to emotional regulation, an ability that is recognized as central to ethical behaviour?

Second, do intrinsic unconscious processes enable the emergence of emotional growth?

Third, does contemplation contribute to the emergence of mature moral functioning?

Fourth, do contemplative practices and EI development make a contribution to ethics pedagogy?

These questions challenge the longstanding dominant ethical model that views principled moral reasoning as the guide for moral behaviour and which emphasized education through moral dilemma discussion and deliberative moral reasoning (Narvaez, 2008). As has been noted earlier, however, moral education discourse has been dramatically impacted by advances in the field of brain science resulting in a shift from a decision making model that is based on reason as epitomized by Kohlberg (1981) to one that incorporates emotion, intuitive thought processes, and deliberative reason.

In order to develop responses to the questions pertaining to the first goal of this chapter, I utilize a moral development framework articulated by Narvaez<sup>16</sup>. This model takes into account the results of recent neuroscience and psychological research. However, the proposed model—known as Integrative Ethical Education (IEE)—is also informed by the virtue ethics of Aristotle and Mencius (as cited in Narvaez, 2010a). It was noted in chapter three that the conceptual approach that appears to match up with current neuroscience understandings is that of virtue ethics as espoused by Aristotle and Mencius (Slingerland, 2010). Therefore, a new understanding of moral development that

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<sup>16</sup> Narvaez (2010b) while acknowledging the importance of emotion in moral decision making argues against Haidt's (2001) social intuition model which holds that intuition and emotion are primary factors in the process, argues that conscious rational cognitive processes are an important part of ethics and should not be abandoned. Paxton and Greene (2010) also hold that while emotion is important, moral reasoning may prove to be a potent social force. The purpose of this paper is not to engage in this debate, rather it is to explore further how contemplation might contribute to giving access to emotions and unconscious processes in a way that assists moral development.

has been informed by recent neuroscience discoveries has also been influenced by ancient ethics traditions. The IEE model describes the attributes of mature moral functioning, of which the ability to regulate emotions is not only vitally important, but also a key component of the ancient ethics traditions, and which for this reason is suitable for addressing the first goal of this chapter (Narvaez, 2008). I have not evaluated whether IEE is in full alignment with virtue ethics. Rather, I have chosen this model for evaluation due to its claim to be informed by the combination of ancient traditions and recent scientific research. I believe its latter claim likely carries more weight in terms of whether it will be adopted in contemporary ethics pedagogy. The ethics model of IEE is suitable for my second goal due to Narvaez's (2008a) claim that it incorporates recent neuroscience and psychology findings and therefore, can be evaluated to determine whether emotional intelligence and contemplative practices contribute to the regulation of emotions in ways not anticipated by Narvaez. This exploration therefore is an extension and or advancement of ethics pedagogy.

To begin this evaluation, I wish to make some conceptual observations about mature moral functioning proposed as part of IEE. Narvaez held that the highest level of moral functioning requires the individual to go through a personal transformation and achieve a state in which ethical behaviour is an unconsciously expressed trait as a consequence of having developed ethical expertise combined with the use of deliberative reasoning (2008a). In making the argument that ethical maturity requires a process of developing expertise, Narvaez (2010a) cites Varela who plumbs Aristotle, and three Asian traditions of



Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism observing: “a wise (or virtuous) person is one who knows what is good and spontaneously does it” (p. 4)

Varela (1999) considers the role that Daoist and Buddhist contemplative practices make to developing ethical expertise. This is something that Narvaez (2008a, 2010a) does not consider in the proposed IEE, which I believe is a conceptual shortcoming of the IEE model. Varela’s observation that “Ethical know-how is the progressive, firsthand acquaintance with the virtuality of self” (p. 63) bears striking similarity to my conclusion in chapter six that: “The standard and guide for ethical behaviour is one’s innate nature.” I arrived at this conclusion based on a reading of the *Huainanzi* before reading Varela, who went on to argue that a critical component of ethical expertise development is mindful practice or what I am calling contemplative practice.

### **An Interpretation of Recent Neuroscience and Psychology: Triune Ethics Theory**

The working definition of mature moral functioning is rooted in the context of a moral development theory known as triune ethics theory (TET), therefore a little background is provided on the theory and the rationale for its use in this paper. As noted above, recent neuroscience research has emphasized the importance of emotions for information processing and behaviour in general and in particular as it relates to moral decision making. This has caused a shift in moral psychology from focusing on reason associated with the neocortex of the brain to considering motivation and emotions which operate implicitly or unconsciously in other parts of the brain (Narvaez, 2008b).

It should be noted however, that there are some caveats that apply to the development of the TET theory postulated by Narvaez (2008b). First, as Greene (2009) observed, “The aim of cognitive neuroscience is to understand the mind in physical terms. This endeavour assumes that the mind *can* be understood in physical terms” (p. 2). So there is some question as to whether the mind *can* be understood exclusively in physical terms and second, the understanding that we do have “is rather crude, conceptualized at the level of gross anatomical brain regions and psychological processes familiar from introspection” (Greene, 2009, p. 26). My purpose here is to note that the TET and such theories are likely not the last word on the neurological processes supporting moral decision making or the broader concept of moral functioning and identity.

What seems to be well established is that “moral judgment emerges from a complex interaction among multiple neural systems whose functions are typically not (and maybe not ever be) specific to moral judgment (Greene & Haidt, as cited by Greene, 2009 p. 26) and that “emotion in all of its functional and anatomical variety” plays an important role in moral decision making (Greene, 2009 p. 26). This body of research has had a significant impact on moral pedagogy through the discovery, using brain scans, that decisions are made in unconscious portions of the brain that are associated with emotions and the body. Milliseconds later, the “decision” is relayed to the consciousness, suggesting that emotions and the unconscious are critical in ethical decision making (Coterill, 1998; Greene & Haidt, 2002).

As Narvaez (2008b) notes, triune ethics theory was developed to take into account “neurobiology, affective neuroscience, and cognitive science to integrate them into a moral psychology for the purpose of informing psychological research on the moral life of persons” (p. 574) which Narvaez (2010a) references as the foundation for IEE ethics pedagogy.

“Triune ethics theory postulates that the emotional circuitry established early in life underpins the brain’s architecture for morality and ethical behaviour, influencing moral personality and potential for moral functioning” (Narvaez, 2009). There are three ways of processing moral information in the brain: the security ethic, the engagement ethic, and the imagination ethic, each of which is underpinned by emotion and motivates individual and group moral action.

Narvaez summarizes them as follows:

The Ethic of Security is focused on self-preservation through safety and personal or in-group dominance. The Ethic of Engagement is oriented to face-to-face emotional affiliation with others, particularly through caring relationships and social bonds. The Ethic of Imagination coordinates the older parts of the brain, using humanity’s fullest reasoning capacities to adapt to ongoing social relationships and to address concerns beyond the immediate. Each ethic has neurobiological roots that are apparent in the structures and circuitry of the human brain. (2008b).

The ethic of security operates instinctually, is oriented to physical survival through self-protection, exploration, and autonomy. In group settings, it emphasizes hierarchy and group loyalty. The engagement ethic relies on

emotional systems and is oriented to intimacy rooted in instincts arising out of mammalian innate sociality and parental care. This ethic has the capacity for meaningful relationships and a deep sense of connection and responsibility for others.

The imagination ethic is associated with the frontal lobes and especially the prefrontal cortex (PFC), which are involved in conscious deliberative reasoning and cognitive processing (Narvaez, 2008a) and the regulation of emotions (Chambers, Gullone, & Allen, 2009; Garland, Fredrickson, Kring, Johnson, Meyer, & Penn, 2010). As noted earlier however, most human decisions are made at the unconscious level, automatically and without conscious control. According to Triune Ethics Theory, the areas of the brain where the imagination ethic operates contribute to moral judgment through coordination of the intuitions and instincts of the engagement and security ethics, which operate at an unconscious level (Narvaez, 2008a). “Connected with every distinct unit in the brain, the prefrontal cortex (PFC) is the only part of the brain capable of integrating information from the outside world with information internal to the organism itself” (Goldberg, as cited in Narvaez, 200b, p. 104). With respect to the function of the imagination ethic, according to Narvaez (2008a),

The Imagination Ethic provides a means for a sense of community that extends beyond immediate relations. Indeed, a self grounded in the Imagination Ethic is broadly aware of human possibilities, including the power of relational co-creation in the moment. Such a self is broadly reflective, demonstrating exquisite self-command for envisioned goals . . .

Humans are at their most moral . . . when the Ethic of Engagement is linked with the Ethic of Imagination. (p. 316)

Normal functioning of the brain structures where the imagination ethic operates depends on regulation of emotions. Associated with the PFC are the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) and the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), both of which play important roles in moral behaviour. Damage to the OFC results in loss of impulse control and antisocial behaviour and the ACC is critical to life-long emotion regulation empathy and problem solving (Narvaez, 2008b). Later, the impact of contemplative practices on regulation of emotion and changes in the PFC will be considered, but next I consider how emotional regulation is part of this moral pedagogy.

### **Mature Moral Functioning and Regulation of Emotions**

As noted above, the development of mature moral functioning is a process of developing moral expertise (Narvaez, 2008a). A critical assumption in this approach is that it is not a matter of the student learning the theory of ethics or a few skills such as “conflict management” in a three month course, rather it is a process whereby the student goes through a personal transformation that expands ethical perspective from care of self to care of self and other, employs moral reasoning, alters automatic moral responses, and ultimately their way of being. Narvaez (2010b) identifies five empirically supported components of mature moral functioning:

1. “Socialization supported by emotional regulation;

2. Habits and dispositions facilitating ongoing ethical self-development;
3. The employment of moral imagination which involves taking the time to deliberate when appropriate while being aware of the fallibilities of both intuition and reason;
4. Development of ethical expertise in a particular domain with a demonstrated skill in ethical sensitivity, ethical judgment, or ethical focus; and
5. Adaptability within networks of sustainable relationships, leading to positive outcomes for the community and the natural world—a contemporary high moral intelligence. (p. 172)

These components support and facilitate self-development, where the individual takes responsibility for a lifetime of personal cultivation and transformation from an ethical novice to expert resulting in the flourishing of the individual and her or his community (Narvaez, 2008a).

Regulation of emotions is the first of the empirically supported components noted above, which is seen as one of the foundations of virtue ethics. Despite MacIntyre's (1984) intellectual bias noted earlier,<sup>17</sup> he acknowledged the importance of emotions and their regulation in his proposal that virtue is the human agency to regulate emotions and direct will towards one's *telos* (one's life purpose). Confucian and Daoist traditions (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006; Chan, 2010), also view regulation of emotions as very

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<sup>17</sup> See chapter two.

important in self-cultivation, and the development of virtue<sup>18</sup>. Regulation of emotions is vitally important in the process of developing ethics according to virtue ethics. Recent scientific research therefore affirms ancient wisdom drawn from diverse traditions. In light of Greene's (2009) comments that neuroethics research is limited in its focus on the physical and has only provided vague indications of the neural processes involved in moral functioning, there is merit in turning to these traditions for insight into ethics pedagogy and caution should be applied in relying only on neuroscience for this purpose.

Narvaez (2008a) proposed Integrative Ethical Education (IEE) as “an intentional, holistic, comprehensive, empirically derived approach to moral character development” (p. 316), which is applicable to all ages. The concept of developing emotional regulation is vitally important to this approach because it is required to support the operation of the imagination ethic, which is conceived as the highest level of ethical functioning in the Triune Ethics Theory (Narvaez, 2009). Narvaez acknowledged that the unconscious mind “dominates human functioning” (p.147) and, among other characteristics, is the “seat of emotions” (p.139). She proposed that emotions can be regulated indirectly and directly. The indirect approach involves providing activities, a caring environment, and ethical exemplars to support emotional regulation and the development of ethical expertise.

The direct approach involves relying on cognitive capabilities to “countermand instincts and intuitions (with) free won't which is the ability that

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<sup>18</sup> See chapters four five and six.

allows humans through learning and will power to choose which stimuli are allowed to trigger emotional arousal” (Narvaez, 2008a, p. 315).

### **The Shortcomings in Narvaez’s Approach to Emotion Regulation**

The concept of “free won’t” (Cotterill, 1998, p. 342) arose from neurological investigations of the brain that show that the unconscious rooted in the body and emotions decides on a course of action, which then enters the awareness of the conscious mind where it feels like the decision was made. Therefore, one of the roles of the conscious rational mind with respect to emotional regulation is to choose, not act, on an impulse emanating from the unconscious (Cotterill, 1998)—hence the term *free won’t*. An interesting observation, however, is that even the conscious decision to choose not to respond to an emotional impulse originates in the unconscious (Cotterill, 1998), emphasizing again the importance of the unconscious. Elaborating, Cotterill (1998) held that consciousness plays the role of providing an awareness that probes the environment and memory for “the significance of its intended action” (p. 344) while the unconscious chooses the action to be taken. Thus, consciousness is merely an “indispensible servant of the unconscious” (Cotterill, 1998, p. 344). This conclusion supports Panksepp’s (2009) observation that change in the unconscious is necessary for cognitive insight and not the inverse. Cotterill’s (1998) positioning of the consciousness as a servant to the unconscious, which Narvaez (2009) associates with intuition, reminds me of Einstein’s observation: “The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created



a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift” (as cited in McMillan, 2004, p. 160).

Narvaez (2009) appears to reflect this bias: “Triune Ethics Theory suggests that the real work of moral judgment and decision-making has to do with the coordination of instincts, intuitions, reasoning and goals by the deliberative mind – the work of the Imagination Ethic” (p. 147). While I agree that deliberation and conscious mental effort are important aspects of moral judgment, this statement inverts the observations made by Cotterill (1998) that the conscious mind is the servant of the unconscious mind and demonstrates a bias towards conscious deliberative processes. Whether the unconscious mind or the conscious mind leads or follows is not important to the point I am making here, but what has been acknowledged is that both are indispensable. I believe that Narvaez is expressing the general emphasis and bias in education on training the rational cognitive mind, and this begs the question: Has pedagogy that explicitly provides instructors and students with the means to address emotions been fully explored and incorporated? For example, we know that in order to train mathematics and reading skills, the pedagogy for this is well developed. However, if one wishes to change one’s behaviour, a fundamental goal of ethics education, what is the nature of pedagogy that explicitly addresses the emotional contents of the mind?

The following considers whether contemplative practices and the development of emotional intelligence contribute to the regulation of emotions—an important aspect of ethics pedagogy.

## **The Contribution of Contemplation to Emotional Regulation**

A broad review of neuroscience and psychological literature examining the impact of contemplation on the brain and behaviour concluded that the “mechanisms of mindfulness play an important role in emotion regulatory processes” (Chambers et al., 2009, p. 563). This conclusion applies across contemplative practices originating in Buddhist and Confucian/Daoist traditions. Other pertinent observations arising out of Chambers et al.’s (2009) study are that small amounts of contemplation can produce changes in neurocognitive functions and the magnitude of these changes increases with practice. In addition, other benefits have been noted such as improvements in psychological and physical health. Chambers et al. concluded that health and well-being are integrally related with the capacity for regulating emotions. Finally, the brain structures involved in regulation of emotions are also involved in the function of the imagination ethic (Chambers et al., 2009; Garland et al., 2010). I turn now to examine in more detail two threads of research that examines contemplative practices—the Buddhist and Daoist/Confucian traditions.

The Center for Investigating Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin has led research in the neuroscience of contemplation with a focus on Buddhist contemplation practices in secular settings. The research examined the difference in brain circuitry of expert versus novice practitioners and suggests that the mental processes of awareness, attention, emotion regulation, and the capacity for happiness and compassion are trainable (Lutz, Dunne, & Davidson, 2006). Davidson (2010), who leads the centre, held that: “(A)ffective processes

are a key target of contemplative interventions. The long-term consequences of most contemplative traditions include a transformation of trait affect” or the emotional nature of one’s personality (p. 10). “Trait” refers to an innate emotional response of an individual to a situation that is observable in the prefrontal cortex and associated brain circuitry. This is contrasted to the term “state,” which refers to top down processes such as conscious cognitive appraisal or attention state which are also capable of regulating emotions (Lutz, Greischar, Perlman, & Davidson, 2009). The distinction between state and trait is analogous to the distinction between effortful and effortless or spontaneous that is observed as skills develop when one advances from novice to expert in any practice (Lutz, Slagter, Dunne, & Davidson, 2008). While a significant body of research exists on the impact of contemplation on the brain, it is worth noting that it is a relatively new field of inquiry where the definition of meditative styles and methodologies for researching their impact on the brain and behaviour are in the process of development (Lutz et al., 2008).

Two significant conclusions can be drawn from this discussion relevant to the first question posed at the beginning of this chapter. It appears that contemplative practices are intended to and are capable of regulating emotions and further, they appear to result in a change such that the emotional response of the individual is expressed spontaneously, effortlessly, or unconsciously. I noted above Narvaez’s (2009) observation that the conscious deliberative mind plays a role in ethics through the expression of “free won’t” (Narvaez, 2008a, p. 315). I propose that contemplation contributes to ethical behaviour by regulating

emotional impulses so that the individual does not have to exercise “free won’t” as often and more often spontaneously does what is right. That is, virtue becomes an unconscious spontaneous expression of being. Perhaps this might be referred to as the “free will” of the unconscious. But, wait a minute—how could there be free will without consciousness? This observation is consistent with the Daoist view that under certain conditions,<sup>19</sup> virtue spontaneously emerges from within the individual. It is also consistent with the view of positive psychologists that under certain conditions, the brain and body have an innate transformative capability, which I suggest later in this chapter may contribute to moral functioning.

Recent neuroscience research has also considered the impact of a contemporary form of Daoist/Confucian contemplative practice known as Integrative Mind-Body Training (IMBT) on the brain and other health factors (Tang et al., 2007a; Tang & Posner, 2009). The technique is based in traditional Chinese medicine and involves body relaxation, breath adjustment, mental imagery, and mindfulness training accompanied by music (Tang et al., 2007). Those involved in one IMBT research session participated in 20 minutes of training over five days were found to have improved in conflict scores, they had lower anxiety, depression, anger, and fatigue, a significant decrease in stress-related cortisol, and an increase in immunoreactivity relative to control groups (Tang et al., 2007). In a subsequent study, brain imaging and physiological measures showed that after similar training, brain changes were observed and

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<sup>19</sup> See chapters five and six.

attention and self-regulation was improved. The authors “believe that IBMT works by facilitating the achievement of a balanced body–mind state, producing the changes in brain and autonomic activity” (Tang et al., 2009). This research indicates that practicing a form of contemplation rooted in Daoist and Confucian tradition results in improved physiological states, regulation of emotions, which is known to be foundations of virtue ethics, as well as neurological changes in the brain.

Learning also appears to be impacted by contemplative practices. In a comparative study, Tang and Posner (2009) considered the impact of two methods of training on brain circuitry, learning, and behaviour. The first method is attention training (AT). It is associated with traditional education and has the goal of altering specific networks related to cognitive tasks. The second approach is derived from contemplative practices known as attention state training (AST) and has the goal of achieving a state leading to more emotional self-regulation (Tang & Posner, 2009). The AT approach involves repetitive practice of a cognitive skill similar to the methods employed in schools and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT<sup>20</sup>). It requires directed attention and effortful control resulting in the training of specific brain networks. One of the drawbacks of this approach is that the mind has a natural tendency to be restless and thus requires effort to control, resulting in mental fatigue (Tang & Posner, 2009). The objective of AST is to produce a balance of awareness between a freely wandering mind and one that is under effortful control. Integrative Mind-Body

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<sup>20</sup> See the next section for a description of CBT.

Training is partly based on the Daoist practices described in four, five, and six balances mental focus and attention to establish a state of restful alertness (Tang & Posner, 2009). While this was a preliminary investigation, Tang & Posner concluded that “AT exercises executive control and enables cognitive capacities for learning” and “AST in children has also been shown to facilitate learning and improve cognition, emotion and performance” (2009, p. 226).

With respect to the first question posed in this chapter, regarding the capability of contemplative practices to regulate emotions, several additional insights follow. Improvements in emotional regulation can be achieved with relatively short periods of practice. Students’ learning ability may be enhanced by improving their attention, and it appears that there are health benefits such as improved immune functioning and reduced response to stress associated with contemplative practices.

### **The Contribution of EI Development to Emotional Regulation**

Contemplation is not the only means by which regulation of emotion has been achieved. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) also helps people regulate emotions. Typically, CBT has been applied to assist individuals adjust emotional responses that hinder their ability to function in everyday life. CBT involves the conscious use of the emotional regulation strategies of suppression or reappraisal to moderate a habitual and disturbing emotional response in the individual (Chambers et al., 2009). Chambers et al. noted that suppression of emotions is not a very effective method and one of the drawbacks of reappraisal is that it requires the individual to recall the disturbing emotion in order to effect a

reappraisal, which perversely reinforces the unwelcomed emotions. Rather than focusing on feeling differently, an intervention that has been successfully applied involves focusing effort on repeatedly practicing desired behaviours (Doidge, 2007). Indeed, practicing desired behaviours, which is a form of CBT, has been incorporated as part of developing one's emotional intelligence. In this situation, the individual who is developing emotional intelligence is not likely concerned with emotional pathology. Rather, she or he decided that certain emotions and behaviours are an obstacle to growth. Thus, the fourth step in developing one's emotional intelligence calls for "experimenting with and practicing new behaviours, thought, and feelings to the point of mastery" (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 112).

Chambers et al. (2009) considered the difference between emotional regulation provided through CBT and that arising out of contemplative practices and noted that contemplative emotional regulation does not involve suppression or reappraisal of emotions as proposed by CBT. Rather, retraining of awareness occurs, which leads to non-reactivity and the ability of the individual to more consciously choose their thoughts and emotions. Awareness and regulation of emotions is an ongoing internal process that is required to manage behavioural responses to the constant stream of emotional information that we receive (Herwig, Kaffenberger, Jäncke, & Brühl, 2010). In this light, Chambers et al.'s (2009) term "non-reactivity" (p. 562) might be a better thought of as an appropriate response that is the result of a change in the innate automatic, unconscious, emotional trait of the individual. I believe this is what Chambers et

al. mean when they say: “mindfulness can be best described as engendering changes to how one relates to emotive perceptions—that is to, appraisals—in general” (Chambers et al., 2009, p. 569). This is an attribute that Lutz et al (2009) identified as a ‘trait’ in contrast to ‘state,’ which refers to top down processes such as conscious cognitive appraisal or attention states, and which are also capable of regulating emotions.

Therefore, two additional resources have been identified that are capable of regulating emotions: contemplation, and the fourth step of emotional intelligence development (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002), which appears to draw its methodology from cognitive behavioural therapy. The final chapter in this thesis considers detail how ethics pedagogy may assist students with inner work that addresses emotions and the unconscious mind.

## **Do Unconscious Processes Promote Emotional Growth?**

Now I turn to the nascent field of positive psychology with references to neuroscience and Daoism to consider further potential benefits of contemplation. The benefits explored here are more speculative in nature than those considered above. My intention is to enrich the understanding of how contemplation may contribute to ethical development and provide a possible explanation for the broad nature of physical, mental, and psychological phenomena noted in studies of contemplation. The second question posed at the beginning of this chapter is:

Do intrinsic unconscious processes enable the emergence of emotional growth?



In its simplest form, this question is analogous to asking: do unconscious processes enable the physical healing of wounds? A commonsense response is of course yes, we all experience physical healing without knowing how it happens. The question I am asking here applies to our emotional and psychological state and this is important from an ethical perspective because our ability to regulate/manage/educate emotions is one of the foundations of ethics.

I return to Narvaez (2008a) as a reference point to consider the concept of emergence. In describing the characteristics of a person who is functioning at a mature moral level, Narvaez (2008a) stated that the self becomes involved in a process of self-authorship, self-creation, and self-expansion. In making this reference, she cites Varela who speaks of the autonomous nature and the self-organizing principle of living systems. Building on this concept, the IEE framework proposes that self-authorship is guided by moral exemplars. The coordination of the intuitive emotional mind and reasoning deliberative mind are important in the process of moral development (Narvaez, 2008a) and the pedagogy is based on the assumption that this coordination is cognitively led. In other work however, the concept of self-generation or emergent properties of neural systems are explored further (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch 1992) and in this thinking, emergence is an innate property of complex biological systems. This work holds that self-creation and expansion is an innate biological unconscious emergent process (Varela et al., 1992). I conclude that Narvaez placed value on the concept of emergence in her reference to self-creation and self-authorship, terms that appear to parallel Varela's concepts of autonomous

nature and the self-organizing principle of living systems. However, she does not explore or consider that these processes result in an unconscious emergence of transformation or growth, indicating a bias to education focused on conscious deliberative activities. I agree that such deliberation plays an important role in self-development, but again I believe Narvaez missed the opportunity to consider the role of unconscious processes in motivating and causing the emergence of a moral self. I now turn to consider this possibility.

The field of positive psychology,<sup>21</sup> a relatively new discipline, has observed and commented on the concept of emergence. For example, Siegel (2009) observed that a “highly complex system such as the human mind-body is likely capable of regulating its own emergence towards self organization, well being and health” (pp. 68-69). Fosha (2009b) noted that under the right conditions, positive affective phenomena have been observed to spontaneously emerge, resulting in healing and or transformation of individuals and contribute to longevity and well-being. In addition, and relevant to the purpose of this chapter, Fosha proposed that there is a convergence of understanding between positive psychology and contemplative practices because the “phenomenon under consideration are not the epiphenomena of a particular practice rather, they are qualities of mind that are wired within us, intrinsic properties of the organism associated with healing and well being” (Fosha, 2009b, p. 252).

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<sup>21</sup> Positive psychology focuses “attention upon the sources of psychological health, thereby going beyond prior emphases upon disease and disorder” (Sheldon, Kashdan, Steger, 2011, p. 455). It is focused on helping both those who might be considered to have difficulties and those who are considered “normal” to grow and transform in a positive way.

Further, positive psychology and contemplative practices “have identified uncannily similar positive affective phenomena as both characteristic of and leading to the positive outcomes that are the aim of their respective practices” (Fosha, 2009b, pp. 252-253). For example, an evaluation of a contemplative practice known as loving kindness where the practitioner focuses on positive regard for others indicates that practitioners experience positive emotions more often, increased mindfulness, a greater sense of purpose in life, augmented social support, and decreased illness symptoms (Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, & Finkel, 2008). The intention of this particular meditation is to generate positive emotions while other types such as IMBT considered above have an open intention but appear to have similar effects (Tang et al., 2007; Tang et al., 2009).

Fosha (2009b) noted that emotions play an important role in transformation, stating: “positive affects are (1) causative of, (2) correlates of, and (3) the result of health enhancing practices” and transformational processes are recursive processes, where more begets more (Fosha, 2009b, p. 254). That is, positive emotions are healing or transformative, and are observed when transformation occurs. If this is the case, it can be concluded that emergence is a factor in personal transformation and that positive emotions play a role in the process.

In chapters four, five, and six it was noted that emotions play an important role in Daoist contemplative practices. Emotions, along with the body and mind, must be tranquil to enable positive, recursive, effects to emerge, which in return

result in improvements in physical, emotional, and mental health. These parallels raise several questions: What are the intrinsic properties of humans that are associated with healing and transformation, and what are the conditions that enable this and how might does contemplative practices contribute to this?

Fosha (2009a) held that, “(T)ransformation is fundamental to our natures” it is the term for “the overarching motivational force that strives toward maximal vitality, authenticity, adaption, and coherence, and thus leads to growth and transformation” (Fosha, 2009a, p. 175). This is not a passive attribute of the brain—rather it is an appetitive nature where the brain just does not learn, “it is always learning how to learn” and is more “like a living creature that can grow and change itself with proper nourishment and exercise” (Doidge, 2007, p. 47). The innate motivation for transformation and growth is marked by physiological changes such as the secretion of hormones accompanied by positive affects (emotions), enabling exploratory states of mind. The positive nature of the experience is the motivation for the brain to seek more, resulting in growth (Fosha, 2009a). One might ask, if transformation is an intrinsic characteristic of humans, why doesn't everyone reach their full potential or why do some people stop growing? The counterbalance to growth is resistance where safety is the primary objective caused by fear and the desire to avoid bad feelings. This is because we are familiar with the difficulty in controlling emotions and have experienced their power to overtake and overwhelm us. In the face of these experiences, people seek safety, which results in immobility. Therefore, it is

necessary to create conditions that support and enable positive emotions and growth (Fosha, 2009a).

The conditions necessary to enable positive change differ from cognitive therapy, the common approach of psychology, which emphasizes talk and analysis in order to affect change. This might be thought of as a top down approach in that it assumes that cognitive processing results in emotional transformation (Panksepp, 2009). The conditions Fosha (2009a) proposed might be thought of as a bottom up approach that focuses first on providing the client a receptive affective experience that can be thought of as unreserved care. This approach forms the backdrop for all other therapeutic processes (Fosha, 2009a) such as cognitive therapy, as it addresses one of the primary concerns of what it means to be human from infancy through adulthood and that is to be in empathetic, supportive, generative relationships with others (Trevarthen, 2009). It appears, according to positive psychology, that transformation towards flourishing is an intrinsic property of humans that is hardwired in the brain and, according to Fosha (2009a), that can be enabled by providing safety and care in a therapeutic encounter.

Daoist contemplative practice calls for creating certain conditions of physical, emotional, and mental tranquility to enable growth and transformation to emerge. In particular, a necessary condition for achieving holistic tranquility was the creation of physical tranquility, which enabled emotional and mental tranquility to ensue. There is evidence in neuroscience supporting creating the conditions of physical tranquility to calm the mind because it has been found that

the body has an important influence on brain states through neural circuits which connect higher brain structures, the brain stem, visceral organs and the autonomic nervous system such that calming the body can calm the mind (Porges, 2009). It has also been observed that positive social interactions have a calming effect on the body—and consequently the brain—supporting the approach of positive psychology to provide a caring environment (Porges, 2009).

While it may seem obvious that a calm body and positive emotional settings likely contribute to calming and healing mental states, the focus of neuroscience research has been on higher brain structures (where consciousness resides) with the assumption that they drive physiological and emotional experience (Porges, 2009). Recent neuroscience research, however, suggests that conscious mental states and physiological emotional states are capable of influencing one another. That is; in certain circumstances, conscious brain states affect the body/emotions and in other circumstances body/emotions states affect conscious brain states (Porges, 2009). This supports the proposal that creating calm physical and emotional conditions can contribute to changes in cognitive states. Porges' (2009) observation of the focus in neuroscience research on higher brain structures perhaps confirms a bias in this field to giving a priority to cognitive processes over emotional and physical processes, a bias that was also observed by Panksepp (2009) in the field of psychology.

This is speculative but the foregoing suggests that, while the approach of positive psychology and contemplative practices differ (one aims to create social/psychological safety and care, while the other aims to create holistic

tranquility through contemplative practice), the underlying neurological processes that are influenced, as well as outcomes may be similar.

I believe the important conclusion with pedagogical implications is: People have intrinsic transformative capabilities that can be enabled through establishing conditions resulting in the emergence of a personal transformation and a broad range of positive outcomes. I believe these outcomes have implications for ethics education, and will be considered next.

### **Does Contemplation Contribute to Mature Moral Functioning?**

Meditation and mindfulness are important aspects of Buddhist and Daoist practices and one of the central objectives of self-cultivation is to enhance the ethics or virtue of its adherents. The third question arising from the consideration of Daoist texts is:

Does contemplation contribute to the emergence of mature moral functioning?

To address this question I compare Narvaez's (2010b) description of the highest level of moral functioning, with the outcomes of Daoist contemplative practices and application of positive psychology. Narvaez stated that the highest level of moral functioning results in "(A)daptability within networks of sustainable relationships, leading to positive outcomes for the community and the natural world—a contemporary high moral intelligence" (Narvaez, 2010b, p.172). This level of moral functioning requires the application of imagination ethic, the fullest expression of human morality (Narvaez, 2009), which provides "a means for a

sense of community that extends beyond immediate (personal) relations, a self “broadly aware of human possibilities, including the power of relational co-creation in the moment” and a self “which is broadly reflective, demonstrating exquisite self-command for envisioned goals” (Narvaez, 2008a, p. 316). This self becomes involved in a process of self-creation and self-expansion (Narvaez, 2008a).

There are strong similarities with the expected Daoist outcomes. For comparison, I repeat one of my concluding statements from chapter five:

Daoist sources suggests personal transformation is enabled through a process that creates conditions facilitating the emergence of awareness of one’s innate nature resulting in transformation from a narrow self motivated by lusts, desires and immediate responses to emotions to a broader self situated in an enhanced awareness of its relationship to the universe and as a consequence a more ethical person.

Fredrickson et al. (2008) proposed a broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, which holds that regular experiences of positive emotions accumulate over time and provide people with a wide range of personal resources. A description of the psychological and mental outcomes of the process of engaging positive emotions bears similarities to the functioning of the imagination ethic described by Narvaez (2008b) and anticipated by Daoists. Fredrickson et al. (2005) noted that those who tap into the transformative process enabled by positive emotions:



Widen the array of thoughts and actions called forth (e.g., play, explore), facilitating generativity and behavioural flexibility . . . [and] broaden [thought action] repertoires . . . Broadened mindsets carry indirect and long-term adaptive value because broadening builds enduring personal resources, like social connections, coping strategies and environmental knowledge” (p. 679).

While this does not specifically address whether people who engage positive emotions are more ethical than those who do not, it does suggest a transformation in the individual similar to that anticipated by Narvaez (2010b) and the Daoists. In psychological terms, the evaluation of emotions as positive or negative is determined in response to the individual’s experience. For example, some people may feel that bungee jumping is exhilarating while others may feel deathly afraid of the experience. The former is positive and the latter a negative emotional response to the experience determined by the individual. Narvaez’s (2010b) higher levels of moral functioning anticipate engaging the transformative processes noted in positive psychology and Daoist contemplative practices, with apparently similar outcomes. Indeed, the pedagogy laid out by Narvaez in her proposed program for moral education (IEE) identifies the importance of providing students with a positive supportive environment (Narvaez, 2010a). The emphasis however, appears to be on conscious activities as reflected in the statement: “(T)he work of the Imagination Ethic, which must be cultivated through deliberative study, offers the means for greater awareness outside the self” (Narvaez, 2009, p.148). Applying conscious reasoning, critical thinking, and

repetition are vital components of education. Neuroscience research supports these approaches as strategies (Doidge, 2007). However, contemplative practices offer a complimentary and supportive avenue for achieving this end. The inner work and contemplative practices of Daoism paradoxically anticipate an expanded awareness beyond the self through increased awareness of one's true self. The language of positive psychologists also anticipates a process of working with the self, which results in an awareness that extends beyond the self to others and the environment as noted above.

It can be concluded that the concept of creating conditions to enable the emergence of positive transformation of individuals is being explored in the field of psychology and those engaged in this inquiry have noted similarities to outcomes anticipated in Asian wisdom traditions. These observations suggest it is possible that contemplative practices contribute to mature moral functioning but further research needs to be done to verify this proposal.

### **Do Contemplative Practices and EI Development Make a Contribution to Ethics Pedagogy?**

The development of ethics requires a transformation of the individual's character at the emotional and intellectual level resulting in a "wise (or virtuous) person who knows what is good and spontaneously does it" (Varela, 1999, p. 4). This phrase, which arose out of an understanding of ancient western and Asian knowledge and neuroscience, sums up in a few words what it means to be ethical. It begs the question: how do we apply ourselves as whole human

beings, physically, emotionally, and intellectually, such that we can spontaneously do good?

In attempting to address this question, I turned to Panksepp's (2009) observation that cognitive insight is not the primary agent of personal transformation, but rather a consequence of healing that occurs at an emotional level. This is consistent with Cotterill's (1998) observation that consciousness is the servant of the unconscious, Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) proposal that we must know our unconscious to know ourselves, and Porges' (2009) observation that certain body and emotional states, which are largely unconscious, can contribute to psychological transformation and healing. It is consistent with the Daoists' attention to inner work that addresses the emotional, prereflective, or unconscious contents of the mind. These observations, supported by science, are contrary to the long western tradition of privileging inferential reason and conscious thought over emotions and the unconscious. This privileging appears to have dominated approaches to psychology, education in general, and business ethics education in particular. I have argued that, while Narvaez (2008a) has made a move in the direction of providing pedagogical approaches to work with emotions and unconscious processes, she too demonstrated a bias towards a pedagogy that primarily addresses conscious deliberative processes and has not fully explored pedagogy that addresses emotions and unconscious processes.

Four questions were considered in light of current neuroscience and psychology:

1. Do contemplative practices and aspects of EI contribute to emotional regulation, an ability that is recognized as central to ethical behaviour?
2. Do intrinsic unconscious processes enable the emergence of emotional growth?
3. Does contemplation contribute to the emergence of mature moral functioning?
4. Do contemplative practices and EI development make a contribution to ethics pedagogy?

There is good scientific evidence that contemplative practices contribute to the regulation of emotions, a pivotal component of ethical development. It was also noted that cognitive behavioural methods employed in EI development also regulate emotions. Contemplation however, provides an additional resource for regulating emotions that differs from cognitive behavioural methods and appears to contribute to spontaneous ethical behaviour. In my opinion, this conclusion justifies introducing contemplative practices as a consistent component of a larger framework of business ethics pedagogy described later.

For those who might think they are unique or alone in providing contemplative practices in business education, the Harvard Schools of Business and Law (Fox, 2004) have been engaged in doing so for some time. Indeed the Harvard Business School sees contemplation as contributing to improved emotional intelligence and better leadership (Williams, 2010). Employing these approaches in ethics pedagogy warrants further consideration and study.

With respect to the second and third questions, investigation of the new field of positive psychology revealed good evidence that human beings are intrinsically endowed with an innate transformative capability that can result in personal emotional growth and or healing. This capability can be enabled through creating certain conditions such as a positive caring environment as described by positive psychologists or by providing certain conditions such as physical mental and emotional tranquility as prescribed by Daoists. These conditions enable brain changes associated with regulation of emotions and appear to provide other broader effects such as enhanced learning abilities, physical and psychological health. This may be pedagogically significant as it provides an additional resource to support ethics education. Because it works with the unconscious and emotions, it is consistent with recent neuroscience findings and it complements traditional pedagogy.

Finally, in response to the fourth question, I believe that Narvaez (2008a) acknowledged the importance of emotions and the unconscious and addresses these matters through the assumption that ethics education is a process of developing expertise supported by the provision of exemplars, a positive caring environment, and relying on conscious deliberation to coordinate the unconscious mind. These are important and necessary proposals. However, I believe that this approach should be augmented by providing teachers with the means to engage students in inner work. This can be achieved through teaching and supporting contemplative practises and providing a pedagogy that supports the development of EI in an ethics context. Chapter eight expands on the

concept of inner work in contemporary educational terms and how it can support ethical development.

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## Discovering Gratitude

Allow me to talk about my transformation and experience of gratitude, beginning when I was a young adult. At that time, I felt that I didn't owe anyone anything, and they didn't owe me anything. I was free to do what I wanted, and go where I wanted. Everything that came to me in the way of opportunities and income was of my own making. I was not indebted to anyone.

Sumantra Ghoshal (2005) argued that the business school's assumption that "human beings are rational self interested maximizes" is wrong because this is a very narrow definition of what it means to be human (p. 82). But this assumption arises out the classical definition of liberalism, which has become an ideology founded on individual freedom as ultimately beneficial for society (Rand, 2004). Ayn Rand argued for something called rational selfishness or rational egoism: the principle that an action is rational if and only if it maximizes one's self-interest. She also held that reason is the only means of acquiring knowledge and rejected all forms of faith and religion. While she has been influential amongst libertarians and conservatives, she has had a broader appeal. According to a survey conducted by the Library of Congress of Book-of-the-Month Club members, her book *Atlas Shrugged* is the second most popular book after the Bible (Wikipedia, 2011).

In the 1970s, many, including me, took on Rand's ideas. There was a feeling that God was dead or not present. In university, we quoted Nietzsche, who said the same: God is dead. We read Sartre, Dostoyevsky, and Kierkegaard—all of whom I felt said pretty much what Rand said. In the end, I felt it was a negative view of life; one that saw the individual as isolated and completely self-responsible. There seemed to be nothing beyond reason and explanation.

Five hundred years ago in the west, people lived mostly in a world of enchantment (Taylor, 2007). That is, spirit and God were palpable experiences that motivated and informed daily life. When spirit is present, the self is porous and open to the presence of spirit and meaning that does not necessarily originate in the self (Taylor, 2007). The pervasiveness of this sense of spirit has been diminished, however, in the secular age where reason and materialism are the dominant discourse. My experience growing up in the 50s through 70s matches this description, that the only thing that counted was reason and your ego-self. There seemed to be no authentic experience of spirit, even though they talked about it in Church and elsewhere. So, what has this got to do with gratitude? Let me try to explain with an example.

The meaning of gratitude from the Oxford dictionary is: the feeling of being grateful and wanting to express your thanks. This word contains a sense of feeling and emotion. The English translation I have of the Chinese word 'Gan' is 'thanksgiving' but it can be considered in terms of each character, *Gan*, and *en*. *Gan* is translated as 'to feel, to move, to touch, and to affect'. 'En' is translated

as 'favour, grace, and kindness'. This expanded sense might be thought of as being moved or touched emotionally by kindness, grace, or a favour that has been given. In this sense, gratitude carries with it the sense of being touched by what the world outside oneself gifts us, and implies a sense of enchantment about the world.

I did not feel this kind of enchantment through gratitude previously. Gratitude was an obligatory word one used to thank others as expected. I was not aware of it originating out of a sense of being touched or moved by others. When I was a child, we used to say "grace" at every dinner, and in this context, grace is a small prayer, thanking God for the food provided. In the larger Christian context, grace is God's gift granted to sinners for their salvation. In this context, grace is something great and life changing given by God to you. The saying "by the grace of God" carries this meaning. It means you couldn't have completed a task or survived without the help of God. Did I think that way? No way! Despite my Christian family background, I was taught not to depend on others, God or human, become independent, and owe nothing to anybody.

You are likely familiar with the song *Amazing Grace*. It is a song of thanks for the grace of God that was written by John Newton after nearly dying aboard a storm-struck ship. He felt the grace of God, and was inspired to write the song. Gratitude was not something that was alive and present in my life in the way it was in John Newton's life. There was no sense of enchantment or the possibility that one could be touched from an unseen external entity.



Moving forward again to last summer, I broke my left arm after a dog ran in front of my bicycle, which caused me to go over the handlebars. When I regained consciousness after surgery in the intensive care ward, I was aware of bright light streaming into the room from the window. I felt like I was in a native longhouse with wonderful people taking great care of me. Here is an excerpt from my journal on my experience after coming out of surgery.

The first thing I felt upon gaining consciousness was a great sense of gratitude for the doctors, nurses, and other staff. It came from deep inside my body. I was barely conscious but I just felt this overwhelming sense of gratitude, and I felt a great sense of connection. After the intensive care unit, the nurses took me into a regular hospital room where my daughter Felicia and wife Eugenia came to see me. In my semi conscious state, I had a great sense of appreciation and gratitude for the support and presence of my family. Again, this feeling came from deep within me.

Perhaps the greatest benefit I received from this experience is these deep felt emotions. It was a palpable experience that gave me a sense of a deep reliance on others in our complex society, and how precious my connections were with my family. Following the accident, I received many calls and visits of support from friends and family, again reminding me of the connections that I have with so many people and the support they offer. Now I would like to contrast this experience with the occasion when I broke my left leg playing hockey in 1974, and had to have surgery to repair it. There are some similarities in terms of the physical experience and the support I received from family and friends.

However, I do not recall feeling the kind of sense of gratitude I experienced in 2010 upon coming out of surgery. In fact, what I recall is that I just took the painful injury as an intrusion on my life, and I don't recall any sense of gratitude.

It seems it has taken a lifetime, trauma, and a great deal of effort to move me from self-centred view to a broader larger perspective. I know there is more to come.

I finish with an observation of the Roman Philosopher Cicero: "Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others" (as quoted in Emmons, 2009, p. 257).

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## **CHAPTER 8 INCORPORATING THE INNER WORK OF EI AND CONTEMPLATION IN ETHICS EDUCATION**

### **Preamble**

A significant theme throughout this thesis is that the regulation of emotions is a critical aspect of ethical development and behaviour. Chapters three and seven proposed that emotional intelligence and contemplative practices provide the means to engage in inner work that contribute to the regulation of emotions. In this chapter, I propose to illustrate how these elements assist in the regulation of emotions and how they make a contribution to ethics pedagogy. To do this, I refer to an ethics course known as Business and Management Values (COHR 301) delivered in the fall of 2010 and 2011 at the UBC Sauder School of Business where emotional intelligence and contemplative practices have been incorporated in pedagogy. This is followed by an account of how each of the syllabus elements work with emotions and their regulation and how this might contribute to ethical development. The chapter concludes with an identification of areas deserving further conceptual research, recommendations for action research, and suggestions for implementing a broader scope of ethics education in business schools based on the theory and practice presented in this thesis.

## **Overview of EI-based and Contemplative Practice-infused Approach to Business Ethics Education**

This section briefly outlines a six-week, three-hour weekly course delivered to third year undergraduate business students at the University of British Columbia, Sauder School of Business. The introduction to the course reads as follows:

Individuals in the context of organizations and culture express ethics and values. In order for individuals to be effective within an organization, they need to be conscious of their own values assumptions and inclinations. This provides a foundation from which to consider the individual's role in the organization as the organization expresses its values with its employees, customers and external stakeholders. This course therefore, places emphasis on assisting you in exploring your own values assumptions and inclinations. The major focus here is to provide you with a taste of this and the tools that are likely to be helpful to you throughout your working life. Development of values and ethics is a lifelong enterprise. (Culham, 2011, p. 1)

The course allocated approximately 50% to engaging students in content such as examining general ethics, corporate culture, and values through readings and discussion. The remaining 50% is dedicated to assisting students become more aware of their emotions and values through in-class and homework exercises. The class employs a number of means to engage student's emotions in a safe manner. I believe the declared intention to work with emotions in the context of

ethics is a contribution to ethics pedagogy. Due to its departure from the norm of engaging students in external cognitive content to an approach where cognitive content is balanced with attention to the student's emotions and personal values, a fair amount of contextual explanation is required. The tone is set with the following observation:

Most of your formal education is dedicated to learning about things external to you such as finance, accounting, human resources, logistics etc. In contrast, much of this class is dedicated to assisting you to learn more about yourself. This is because one of the foundations of ethics draws from Socrates' famous saying *know thyself*. It turns out that one of the best vehicles we have for knowing ourselves are our emotions, and so we are going to focus a lot on helping you explore your emotions in this course. (Instructor communication in class)

It is my view that learning ethics is a lifetime process and impossible to teach in six weeks. What I aim to do in this course is to provide a foundation of ethics—this being the ability to be self-aware, to know one's self—that can be observed in relations with other people. If one cannot function ethically in interpersonal relationship with co-workers, friends, and acquaintances, I believe that consciously expressing values and ethics in the context of values held by business or at a more senior level of responsibility, expressing values on behalf of businesses is difficult. The focus of the course therefore, is on knowing one's emotional self, becoming more conscious of how one experiences emotion in interactions with others, and learning some ways to change those interactions if

desired. It is hoped this will inspire students to become more active in the process of their life long journey of learning ethics. Following is a brief description of the two major components of the class: (1) the inner work of emotional intelligence and contemplative exercises and (2) engaging students in ethics concepts through readings and assignments. The emphasis in the description of the cognitively focused second component is to illustrate how it contributes to revealing to students emotions and values.

### **The Inner Work of EI Development and Contemplation**

The development of EI and engaging in contemplative practices involves working with an individual's internal experience. When Socrates said, "know thyself," he meant the inner self, the soul. This knowledge is gained through introspective effort (Hadot & Davidson 1995). Our inner life consists of "reflections on thoughts, feelings, images, dreams, reactions, ruminations, and processes that can be either internally generated and/or generated in response to an external event" (Cohen, 2009, p. 31). The process of knowing one's emotions, which are rooted in the body and the unconscious, is an exercise of inner work that is "a way of working on and with perceptions, sensations, memories, and cognitions, all of which constitute a person's experience" (Cohen, 2009, p. 31). Intentionally engaging in this work enables the individual to view life and relationships more holistically. For example, conflicts and differences may be seen as part of a collective whole, social reality may be seen as a construction rather than unchangeable, and identity may be experienced as malleable (Cohen, 2009, pp. 39-40). Inner work can cause a change in perception that is "felt emotionally and

physically and leads to a deeper understanding of self and life” and opens up the possibility for personal transformation (Cohen, 2009, pp. 39-40). Inner work “refers to reflective practices conducted under the gaze of consciousness, depends on the capacity to self observe” (Cohen, 2009, pp. 31) and includes development of personal awareness including:

1. Observing experience while being engaged.
2. Reflecting through memory after the initial experience is past.
3. Imagining possibilities.
4. Staying focused on inner experience.
5. Employing a variety of methods and perceptual frameworks that allow and facilitate inner work. (Cohen, 2009, p. 40)

The purpose for introducing this understanding regarding inner work is to broaden the scope of that which can be considered as reflective contemplation. For example, journaling or a conversation with a friend might be— depending on how it is done—considered as inner work activities of the type listed under number 2. Inner work in this understanding involves consciously reflecting on one’s inner experiences through various means.

Cohen (2009) has applied this approach to inner work in a post secondary educational setting, a rare instance of a traditional education setting that attends to the inner experience of the student (Cohen, 2009). I will relate my description of ethics pedagogy to the activities listed above.

The activities that support personal awareness and inner work are described in Table 1. They include completion of an emotional intelligence survey; an exercise to explore one's purpose in life; an exercise to assess one's strengths and weaknesses; exercises to practice a social competency such as conflict management; and an emotional intelligence report, which also documents experiences doing the contemplative exercises. Contemplation activities include doing contemplation every class followed by discussion; encouragement to do contemplation at home, and completion of a weekly journal to record experiences related to contemplation and the emotional intelligence exercises.

### **How Inner Work Engages Emotions and Contributes to Ethics.**

Developing a social competency, the seventh item in Table 1, is where the rubber hits the road with respect to inner work because it is in the activity of practicing unfamiliar behaviours in interactions with others where intense emotions may arise and are most noticeable. In addition, and, importantly, it is in encounters with others that ethics are practiced. Other aspects of the course such as journaling and contemplation primarily, but not exclusively provide support for developing a social competency. Therefore, I will provide a description of the other elements first followed by a description of developing a social competency and a fictional narrative that illustrates how it might be experienced.



### **Introductory Lecture: Inner Work: Engaging Students**

The first element of the course is an introductory lecture that sets expectations and it is particularly focused on outlining the rationale for engaging in EI and contemplative work. This is important because the course differs from the norm in significant ways. I find that it is necessary to repeat aspects of the rationale for doing inner work several times throughout the first few classes. Most students have heard of emotional intelligence, but few have encountered it in the context of ethics. Therefore, I include in my introductory lecture some of the research findings to support incorporation of emotional intelligence in business ethics education:

<b>Table 1 Outline of Emotional Intelligence and Contemplative Component of UBC Sauder School of Business COHR 301 Business and Management Values Course</b>	
Activity	Function Description
1. Introductory lecture: Engaging in Inner Work.	The purpose is to provide students with a rationale for engaging in EI, contemplation, and other activities, which are not usual elements of class.
2. Complete an emotional intelligence survey <sup>22</sup> (Wong, Law, & Wong, 2004).	The purpose is to give the student a general indication of their EI in four components: emotional self-awareness, regulation of one's emotions, awareness of emotions in others, and facilitation of performance in others.
3. Complete an exercise to explore one's purpose in life	Discovering one's purpose and knowing yourself are consistent with
4. Complete an exercise to assess one's current strengths and weaknesses.	MacIntyre's concept that ethics development is the process of moving from who you are now towards your purpose (presumably a better state) which he refers to as <i>telos</i> <sup>23</sup> . These exercises rely on EI development pedagogy provided in chapters 4 and 5 of Boyatzis & McKee, (2005).

<sup>22</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Chi-Sum WONG, Department of Management, of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong for the opportunity to use this survey in my research (Wong, Law, & Wong, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> See chapter two for a description of this.

<b>Table 1 Continued Outline of the Inner Work Component of COHR 301</b>	
Activity	Function Description and Comments
5. Participate in a 5-10 minute contemplative exercise every class.	Students are informed that neuroscience holds decisions are predominately body and emotion based. The contemplative exercise focus therefore, is to assist students develop awareness of emotions as felt in the body. A discussion is held after the exercise to surface experiences and provide context. Students are encouraged to practice at home and with their coach.
6. Weekly journal experiences.	Students are required to journal their experiences weekly and hand in the journal with their final report. The journal consolidates experiences doing the exercises and provides a record of progress that might be missed if not recorded. The journal is not graded but marks are deducted if not turned in.
7. Students select a social competency for development with the assistance of a coach of their choosing.	Students select from a list of personal and social competencies (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2004) and develop specific behaviours, to practice daily. They meet weekly with a coach of their choice who is recommended to be supportive and honest. This is consistent with concepts for development of EI (Goleman et al., 2002)

<b>Table 1 Continued Outline of Emotional Intelligence and Contemplative Component of COHR 301</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Function Description and Comments</b>
8. Complete an initial EI report in the second week of class.	The initial EI report provides faculty with the opportunity to give early guidance to the student.
9. Complete a final EI report in the last week of class.	The final EI report requires students to comment on their experience with various aspects of class and to discuss insights and any changes they may have experienced throughout the course.

- Neuroscience research shows that ethical decisions are usually made unconsciously and in the part of the brain that processes emotions and physical sensations (Greene & Haidt, 2002; Haidt, 2001).
- Our first reaction to value laden situations is physical and emotional, conscious thought and reason come later (Cotterill, 1998; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).
- We can learn to change our emotional response and values through conscious awareness and practice (Garland et al., 2010; Goleman et al., 2002).
- Research shows that emotional intelligence and virtue ethics are very similar<sup>24</sup>.
- Emotional regulation is important to both and higher levels of EI and have been shown to be related to ethicality<sup>25</sup>.
- Research shows that higher EI is correlated with better work performance, higher positions, greater merit pay, and improved ability to work with others (Lopes, Grewal, Kadis, Gall, & Salovey, 2006).

Often students are of the view that emotional responses can be negative and are not always open to change. The following context is provided to address these issues:

- Emotions were developed through evolution and are mostly a rational response to aid survival (Panksepp, 2009).

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<sup>24</sup> See chapter two.

<sup>25</sup> See chapter two and three.

- Our emotional response includes not just consideration of the self and its survival but also consideration for others (Trevarthen, 2009).
- When accessed in a supportive environment, emotions may be a powerful transformational force (Fosha, 2009; Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, & Finkel, 2008).
- Emotional responses can be modified given the desire to change through conscious reason based effort and contemplative practices (Lutz, Brefczynski-Lewis, Johnstone, & Davidson, 2008; Lutz, Slagter, Dunne, & Davidson, 2008; Tang & Posner, 2009).

The process of implementing contemplative practices in class was relatively low key, and was done in support of a much larger focus on developing emotional intelligence and completing ethics readings and projects. This approach is taken because it is, for many students, the first time they experienced contemplation exercises in a university class or in their lives for that matter. Some have done yoga and a very few have meditated. Often students associate contemplation with religious practice. Some initial feedback on contemplative sessions include feelings of awkwardness or embarrassment while standing breathing with eyes closed in a class. These associations and concerns occur despite a 30-40 minute preparatory lecture where I present the reasons listed above for supporting emotional intelligence and the reasons below for supporting contemplative practices. Those reasons include:

- Awareness of one's emotions and emotional regulation are important in the development of ethics (MacIntyre, 1984; Narvaez, 2010a) and neuroscience research indicates that contemplative practices improve emotional regulation (Davidson, 2010; Tang & Posner, 2009).
- Achieving emotional awareness can be achieved through paying attention to one's body (Schulz, 1998). Contemplative practices assist in increasing awareness of one's body and emotions (Roth, 1999).
- Neuroscience shows that changes in brain structure and emotional regulation can be achieved with relatively little amounts of contemplation, therefore it can be implemented easily, and results can be achieved relatively quickly (Tang & Posner, 2009). However, to maintain and augment ethical development, contemplation should become a regular habit.
- Contemplative practices reduce stress and improve health and learning (Chambers, Gullone, & Allen, 2009; Davidson et al., 2003; Tang et al., 2007)
- Contemplative practices are a complement to other ethics development activities and therefore, are not the sole focus of ethical development<sup>26</sup> (Vokey, in press).
- Contemplative practices have been implemented in programs at the Harvard Schools of business and law (Fox, 2004; Williams, 2010).

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<sup>26</sup> See chapter seven

I have found that despite this explanation, it is not until about the second or third week, when experience has been gained with the elements of inner work, that an understanding of the value of inner work exercises develops and initial scepticism softens.

### **Completion of an EI Survey**

The EI survey is completed before the first class and does not count towards student's grade. Students are told that the score is not as important as discovering what needs improvement. Completion of the EI survey sparks interest, engages some students' emotions, and serves as a way of pointing to identifying areas for improvement of EI. The class average in the survey is below the expectations of most students who are used to achieving high grades. This often provides the motivation for many high achieving students to improve their EI. The scores are divided into two broad categories: personal competence (awareness of one's emotions) and social competence (awareness of emotions in others) and typically, students score higher in personal than social competence. Students are provided guidelines for interpreting the survey. Since ethics is fundamentally about relations with others, this generally sets up a motivation and orientation to improving skills in working with others.

### **Exercise to Explore One's Ideal Self**

Developing an understanding of one's purpose or *telos* and knowing one's self are important elements of both virtue ethics and development of emotional



intelligence<sup>27</sup>. Through exercises provided in chapters four and five of *Resonant Leadership* (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005) students explore these aspects of themselves. With respect to understanding one's purpose, students are urged to think beyond career and immediate desires to a longer term and more expansive view that is less instrumental. The development of one's purpose, parallel to MacIntyre's concept of *telos*<sup>28</sup>, is not about discovering the career for which one is suited, rather, it can be epitomized by one of the questions students respond to in the exercise: "What will people say about me and my contributions at my funeral" (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005, p. 89)? The exercise takes the student beyond a self-serving goal by invoking Martin Luther King Junior's "I have a Dream Speech" and asks the participant to state their dream for themselves, their family, community, country, and the world (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). This establishes a noble purpose, sets up a sense of hope, and provides motivation for improvement and working through the difficult experiences associated with personal transformation (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). This exercise inspires introspection and brings into students' awareness feelings and emotions about themselves and the legacy they wish to leave (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). Most students engage in this exercise whole-heartedly.

### **Exercise to Explore One's Current Self**

The fourth exercise asks students to think about how their life unfolded to define who they are now. The purpose is to provide the individual "with a clear

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<sup>27</sup> See chapter 2

<sup>28</sup> See chapter 2

insight about what they are good at, what is difficult for them, and what they need to learn and do in life to be their best” (Boyatzis, & McKee, 2005, p. 111). This serves to support personal transformation as it generates a “mindful awareness of who you currently are” (Boyatzis, & McKee, 2005, p. 111) and creates motivation to move towards the vision established in the fourth exercise. This exercise parallels virtue ethics<sup>29</sup> in that it brings into focus awareness that we are formed by our biology, life experiences, culture, and current situation and how we act is a consequence of our experiences, roles, identity, dreams, values, and beliefs (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). This supports the ethics assignments described later in this chapter based on *Defining Moments* (Badaracco, 1997)<sup>30</sup>. Similar to developing one’s vision, the exercise of understanding who one is now is designed to stimulate introspection. For example, the individual is asked to write a letter from the heart to someone who has been very special who has helped shape her or him (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). These exercises are not graded, although if they are not turned in, marks will be deducted from students’ participation grade and I state that I look for reference to the work in their final EI report, which is describe below.

### **Contemplative Exercises**

The first contemplation exercise is introduced with the purpose of engaging in inner work and developing emotional self-awareness, one of the key elements of emotional intelligence. Students are encouraged to practice at home

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<sup>29</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>30</sup> An example of one of the questions asked when facing an ethics question is: Which of the responsibilities and values in the conflict have the deepest roots in my life and in communities I care about (Badaracco, 1997 p. 82)?

and or with their coaches<sup>31</sup> to assist in developing their EI. The first contemplative session begins by requesting students to recall a positive or negative emotional experience that occurred in the past week or two, and discuss it with a neighbouring student. The purpose is to bring feelings to mind associated with experience as a preparation for contemplation. The following is provided as context before engaging in these exercises:

If you pay attention, the body can present feelings, images, sounds, words. Paying attention to positive and negative emotions can help you learn about yourself. Positive feelings tells you what you are attracted to and negative feelings tell you what you avoid, however, sometimes you must face that which you avoid, and sometimes it can be a warning.

This exercise helps you perceive emotions in others, helps you to know your values better, can provide an emotional dimension and understanding of situations and when making decisions can provide access to emotional knowledge about the decision. If practiced regularly, these exercises can provide a calming influence. (Culham, 2011, COHR 301 course content)

Following the explanation above, I provide instructions for the contemplative exercise as follows: they are to stand up with hands relaxed at their sides; breathe naturally with eyes closed, and pay attention to where they feel the emotion in their body. I ask them to pay attention to the sensations associated

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<sup>31</sup> A description of the role of coaches is provided below in item 7: Developing a Social Competency

with the feeling. Students then practice this for about five minutes in class, after which an open discussion is held where students ask questions or relate their sensations and experiences. In general, negative emotions are felt as a weight, constriction, pain, or dullness in a particular location while positive emotions are noted as a sense of lightness, expansiveness, and well-being, and are often felt as a whole body experience. Other sensations are reported such as feeling the need to move, tingling, and warmth or cold in certain locations of the body. Often students note difficulties such as an inability to stop their mind from racing from thought to thought. Alternatively, they are simply unable to concentrate on their breath as they are under a great deal of pressure and stress. When these comments surface I suggest that they simply accept the thoughts and not try to get rid of them. A simple technique to assist with this is the suggestion to see the thoughts as clouds that come and go. To take this experience a little deeper, I suggest students try to feel what the physical sensation is telling them about the situation and either talk or write about it.

The discussion that follows the contemplative exercise provides valuable validation to students of their inner experience because it is very new to most and the sensations are usually subtle and are not normally labelled or articulated in normal discourse. The discussion in the early sessions builds support for students to continuing contemplative practice on their own. As the class progresses it appears to me that either inner awareness improves and or students are more willing to discuss their experiences. This generates a snowball effect.

As the course progresses, students become more comfortable with the contemplative exercises. From my casual observation, it appears that students experience an increased awareness of emotions and where and how they are felt. Some students note that this awareness assists them in regulating their emotions. Other effects are observed such as a greater sense of calm and relaxation, reduced conflict, improved sleep, and improved decision-making. Some people do not notice any effect.

I have argued in earlier chapters that contemplation results in the emergence of ethics. It is not possible from casual observation to determine whether this indeed is an outcome. However, student self reports suggest increased levels of awareness of emotional states and changes in perspectives occur. These are discussed below.

### **Journaling**

Students are requested to begin journaling following the first contemplative exercise and to maintain a weekly journal throughout the course. The journal is intended to document experiences with contemplative exercises, coaches, and the process of developing a social competency. The purpose of the journal is to help consolidate students' contemplative and emotional experiences and form a basis from which to prepare a final EI report.

Consolidation occurs in several ways. First, once people begin paying attention to their emotions, they are surprised at how much their days are filled with emotional experiences and how fleeting the emotions are. As noted above,

the contemplative exercises are designed to assist students in becoming more aware of their emotions. Therefore, the first consolidation is simply recognition of the presence of emotions and their significance in life. Obtaining this awareness facilitates the ability to moderate emotions before being overwhelmed by emotions, an important aspect of ethical development. The second form of consolidation occurs in developing an awareness of change in contemplative practice, response to coaches, journaling, and emotional responses to social competency exercises. To give an example of how this works, I will provide a first person fictional account of the role of a journal in developing the social competency of informing. I may have decided to practice informing team members, friends, or family of my thoughts and feelings five times a week when before I said little about my feelings. My first journaling entry reveals a sense of fear, reluctance, and awkwardness. I may be afraid of rejection or conflict. After several weeks of practice, I might note in my journal, "I feel more comfortable about doing this now and no one has rejected me in fact people are talking to me more and showing their respect for me by asking me questions." The differences between early and subsequent entries demonstrate a transformation. Without journaling, just as emotions are fleeting, the progress made in these exercises would not be acknowledged and possibly lost. Often, changes such as the one described above are made even when it was thought it was difficult or impossible to do so. Journaling consolidates small successes and builds a foundation for further change. It is my opinion that, when journaling is utilized in this way, it is

also a contemplative exercise as its focus is on describing and enhancing awareness of one's inner experience.

### **Developing Social Competencies**

As mentioned, developing a social competency is where the rubber hits the road in the sense that it draws on the foregoing elements for support in a live situation. Students are provided a list of social competencies to choose from, which include descriptions of unskilled, skilled, and overused skill behaviours associated with each competency (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2004). Listening is an example of a social competency and one description of unskilled listening is the individual: “cuts people off and finishes their sentences if they hesitate,” and a description of an overused skill includes “may spend too much time listening” (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2004, p. 201). Students are requested to review these descriptions and select a competency, which they feel they need to improve. They are then requested to identify a specific behaviour to practice repeatedly that assists them in developing this skill. For example if they have chosen to improve their listening skill, the new and specific behaviour they may chose to practice might be, “when I am in conversation with others I will not interrupt them or say anything until they have completed their idea or sentence.” Students are instructed that to be effective, the action must be specific and repeated frequently until it becomes a habit.

As mentioned, students select a coach (usually anyone they trust and who has their best interest at heart) and make a commitment to the coach that they will practice the new behaviour a certain number of times per week. They meet

weekly with the coach to discuss past progress and make commitments for future practice. A few elements are important. The first and most is the commitment to the coach to practice the new behaviour. Because the new behaviour is unfamiliar and often uncomfortable to practice—especially at the beginning—the commitment to the coach motivates practice and holds the student accountable for doing so. The second important aspect of coaching is the supportive and honest conversation with the coach regarding successes and failures, and the third is any other general conversation regarding the exercise and the student's desires, emotions, or behaviour. Engaging in the whole process—including doing the breathing exercise with the coach—creates a supportive, caring context within which the conversations unfold.

Development of the social competency contributes to ethical development primarily because it actively engages the student in consciously practicing emotional self-regulation, which is a form of cognitive behavioural therapy. In addition, even though improving listening skills for example, seems to be simple and minor exercise, it has a broader impact in terms of enlarging the student's social and ethical awareness and engaging the student emotionally. While the focus may be on listening for example, it has been observed that this seemingly small act results in less conflict, misunderstandings, and improved relations with others. Similar experiences have been observed in those who develop informing—improving communication skills—or conflict management skills.

Developing social competency is an example of the application of cognitive behavioural therapy designed to train “free won't,” which was identified



as a critical component of emotional regulation in chapter seven. Recall that free won't is the ability to stop undesirable emotional impulses. In the example that follows, I wish to show that rather than exercising "free won't," individuals learn to acknowledge their distressing emotions such as fear, or anger and act with courage. I present a first person account, which illustrates the nuances of the exercise representing not just my own experience, but draws from a variety of experiences I have witnessed over my career<sup>32</sup>.

Let us say that I am a good listener but I am not very good at informing others of my views and opinions. Therefore, in teamwork, I feel that I have not been recognized and have not contributed as much as I could. I therefore choose informing as a skill to develop. I commit to my coach that in situations where I usually remain silent I will speak up and inform others of my thoughts and feelings. I have been given a technique that will help me through this and it is to acknowledge how I feel in the moment. I am able to acknowledge my feelings because I have been doing the contemplation exercises focused on improving the awareness of my emotions that are felt in my body.

When an opportunity presents itself to speak out in a team setting, I get butterflies in my stomach and a lump in my throat. My first reaction is to try to control the feeling by ignoring it and cutting it off but the more I do this the stronger it gets and I just can't muster the courage to speak. The next time this occurs, I recall the suggestion of my teacher that rather than denying or controlling my emotions I should try to acknowledge my emotions and label it.

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<sup>32</sup> This is an idealized description that is not representative of any individual experience.

When I try this, I recognize that I am experiencing fear. Somehow acknowledging my fear and the awareness of my body sensations reduces the impulse to say nothing, so I have the courage to leap in and say my piece. To my surprise, no one criticises me and in fact others express appreciation for my statements. It turns out to be a good experience. I document this experience in my journal and I discuss this with my coach. He or she is supportive and asks me to commit to doing the same thing five times next week and I agree. The next time I do this, it is easier and I am very pleased. However in a subsequent situation where there is more pressure to perform or where there are people present who I know are more critical and less supportive, I don't express my views. I feel like a failure, criticize myself, and don't keep my commitment to the practice over the remainder of the week, finding excuses not to do so. I document this in my journal. In the subsequent meeting with my coach, we discuss these experiences and he or she encourages me and gives me credit for the successes I have. In subsequent weeks, I find it easier to tell people what I think and feel. By the end of the term, I am surprised that outside of meetings people are talking with me engaging me more. I have discovered that letting others know my thoughts and feelings is valued by others and results in closer relationships with others. In reviewing my journal, I see that my experiences and responses have altered over the term and this encourages me to continue.

This is not all. While it is not necessary to know why one behaves the way one does for this exercise to be effective, often it results in developing a deeper awareness and this may come through interaction with others. For example, I

may be in a team where an individual is frequently talking and saying what they think. When I hear her or him speak, I get a knot in my stomach that tells me I am upset and I want to tell him or her to shut up. I realize this is not an appropriate response and say nothing. Following the meeting, I write out my experience in my journal and connect my reaction to the fact that I was taught as a young person, children are to be heard and not seen and when I did speak up as a child I was usually criticized so felt I had nothing to add. Given this early life experience, I don't want to risk being shown as inadequate for saying something that others judge as stupid. Witnessing others practice different behaviour and increasing my awareness of my body and emotions has helped me realize that I am operating under a lifelong message to stay quiet or be seen as stupid. This awareness frees me from the self-imposed injunction to stay quiet and enables me to interrupt the talkative person politely with my own views or concerns. Quite often, this exercise evokes an initial desire to control emotions or it is seen as something that is designed to control emotions. However, it appears that it works best when individuals acknowledge all emotions—negative or positive. I inform students that denying or controlling negative emotions is an exercise in self-denial so it is better to acknowledge and accept these emotions. There is a fear that in doing so, one will lose control, but it appears that acknowledging negative emotions helps the individual to act differently. I wouldn't call this free won't. Perhaps it is a form of indirect free will.

## **The Initial EI Report**

The initial EI report—worth 5% of the term grade—is completed after the first week of class and is important in several ways: as the course differs significantly from others, it serves as a means to evaluate whether the student understands the EI exercises and is engaging in them as expected. Since it occurs early in the term, it offers the opportunity to redirect students if they are off on a tangent. It also provides the opportunity to reinforce that the course is intended to engage students at an emotional level. The grading rubric, shared in advance, shows that 20% is given for addressing all the assignment requirements and 40% is given for expression of feelings and the remainder for rational explanations in responding to the requirements. This emphasizes the balance of emotions and thought that are expected to be addressed throughout the course. The report requirements are provided below:

- Who did you choose as your coach(es)? Why?
- Describe what you learned about yourself from the EI survey.
- Which competency(ies) did you choose? Using your EI survey and the component of competency descriptions labeled “under-skilled” or “over-skilled” describe the reasons for your choice of competency.
- Describe one or more new behaviours you are going to practice to improve your competency during the course. For example, if you chose informing as a competency to improve; the behaviour you might choose is to practice telling your friends at least five times per week what you feel about an issue that is important to you.

- Describe your experiences using the breathing exercises to improve your awareness of emotions. (COHR 301 Initial EI Report Requirements Culham, 2011, p. 1)

### **The Final EI Report**

The final EI report—worth 20% of the term grade—is turned in after the last class and is graded in a similar manner to the initial EI report. Students are provided the requirements for the final EI report at the beginning of class so that they are aware of the expectations for the report. This is important as it illustrates how the various components of the course feed into the final report. The requirements are as follows:

Socrates believed the unexamined life is not worth living. The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with exercises that help you consolidate what you learned about your inner emotional world and relationships with others through the class exercises. Your task is to summarize your experiences by addressing the following:

1. Describe your weekly journaling experience.
  - a. What difficulties, successes did you experience journaling?
  - b. Review your journal from beginning to end and comment on the changes you observe in yourself.
  - c. Describe how journaling might have helped you in team work or developing your competency
  - d. Describe anything else that you learned through journaling?

2. Describe your experiences using the breathing exercises to improve your awareness of emotions.
  - a. What emotions, positive and negative did you have? Where did you feel them?
  - b. How did your awareness of emotions change over the 6 weeks of class?
  - c. What did you learn about yourself from this exercise?
  - d. Describe how this might have helped you in team work, developing your competency or anything else.
3. Discuss your experiences with your coach over the term.
  - a. How often did you meet with your coach?
  - b. What did you learn from your coach?
  - c. Describe your relationship with your coach. Did it change over the six weeks? If so how?
4. Describe your experience in completing:
  - a. Resonant leadership exercises contained in chapters 4 and 5.
5. Describe your experiences in any university teamwork or personal relationships with others over the last 6 weeks.
  - a. Describe how your awareness of emotions in others and your facilitation of performance in others changed over the period.

- b. Did you notice any changes in your relationships with others? If you did what was the difference?
  - c. What did you learn about relationships?
  - d. What difficulties did you experience?
6. Discuss opportunities you see for future EI development and add anything else you like. (COHR 301 Final EI Report Requirements Culham, 2011, p. 1)

The reader will notice that both the initial and final EI reports are quite prescriptive. I found it necessary to provide specific requirements because without this level of detail, the responses tended to be wide ranging and miss the intent of the exercises. This level of structure however, did not prevent students from expressing their unique individuality nor did it stifle emotions and expression of their personal experiences. In a number of cases, I was so struck by the depth of feeling expressed that I found myself pausing to take in the import of the content.

There are several observations worth noting. The entire class is highly structured and this provides a safe container within which students may explore personal emotional experiences that they may choose to discuss. The initial and final EI reports provide a structure for expression of feelings and emotions. In addition, these reports are the bookends to activities such as knowing one's self and one's purpose, accessing one's emotions and values through contemplation, actively doing practicing social competencies, and journaling—all of which

engages students in inner work. Finally, the inner work supports the development of virtue ethics.

## **Engaging Students in Business Values and Ethics Concepts**

The development of self-awareness in personal interactions is conducted within the context of a conversation about corporate and societal values guided by structured readings and course deliverables. This section describes how working with the concepts of ethics as presented in the readings and lectures supports the objective of increasing emotional awareness and personal understanding of students' values. There are four components of the content portion of the class: (1) an introduction to various ethical models in the first week of class (students are advised that the class is focused predominately on virtue ethics); (2) a class and online discussion, which provides the material for; (3) a final values report; and (4) a group presentation (Aquino, 2009)<sup>33</sup>. The class discussion and final values report are designed to complement the emotional self-awareness component of the course. Therefore, the following paragraphs describe this aspect of the course.

As a preparation for weekly class discussions, students read from several texts and articles that address corporate, personal, and societal ethical issues. One of the key texts used is *Defining Moments* (Badaracco, 1997), which I believe relies on virtue ethics as a model for consideration of ethical choices junior, intermediate, and senior business people have to make in the workplace.

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<sup>33</sup> A significant portion of the reading list, the final values report, and group presentation design were made available by Karl Aquino.



The text references work situations that might be thought of as mini case studies. Rather than relying on solutions driven by the “Futility of Grand Principles” (Badaracco, 1997, p. 25-37) of utilitarian or deontological approaches, the text provides a framework of questions intended to provoke, challenge, and elicit personal answers of readers which helps “them frame thoughtful, practical, personally meaningful ways of resolving the inescapable dilemmas of life and work” (Badaracco, 1997, p. 10).

In the class, students are divided into groups of up to five and each week individuals in a pre-assigned group are required to identify one argument from the readings that they either strongly disagree or agree with.<sup>34</sup> Each individual—without discussion with other group members—then prepares a two-paragraph statement that gives reasons and feelings associated with their agreement or disagreement and a personal example supporting their position. In addition, they pose a question for class discussion. All five students are required to read the other four students’ statements online before class and post a short one-paragraph response before class, which faculty also reviews in preparation for class. Class begins with a general question and answer period, a five to seven minute contemplative session and an instructor facilitated student discussion about the contemplative experience and then moves into the class discussion component.

Each group of students who submitted online statements before class gives a three to five minute presentation on their position and question. Then

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<sup>34</sup> This portion of the course was designed with the assistance of the Sauder School of Business Learning Technology Services.

students sitting in their pre-assigned groups select a question to discuss from the presentations and develop a response. They have 10 to 15 minutes to do this; a selected representative has one to two minutes to summarize their views, which generates more discussion and provides faculty the opportunity to make observations and provide further content. Following the class, all students are required to prepare a reflective paragraph on the class discussion that must be included in an appendix of the final values report. Peer evaluation of the group discussion is utilized to motivate students who are not in the presenting groups to complete the readings.

The final values report builds on the readings and class discussions. The purpose of this assignment is to assist students to know their values better and record how they might have changed in response to the class readings and discussions. Students are to address the following questions in the final values report: (1) What values are most important to me? (2) Why do I hold them? (3) How do I know that these values are important and worth having? (4) How and why are my values changed as a consequence of this course? (5) How do these values influence my actions in the world?

### **Contribution of Ethics Concepts to Ethical Development**

The portion of the course described above which addresses ethics concepts and business values contributes to ethical development and integrates with the EI and contemplative work in several ways. The class discussion assignment requires students to state whether they agree or disagree with the assigned readings and give reasons and feelings based on personal experiences

that support their positions. Often the reasons given by students will only reference text material rather than personal experience. However, the requirement to consider the concepts presented in the texts in the context of students' personal experiences and feelings results in students engaging in an introspection that otherwise is not likely to occur. This exercise also highlights the importance of ethics and knowing one's values.

My experience is that, without the requirement to consider personal experiences, the conversation becomes intellectual, which is insufficient to engage students as they would when facing an ethical decision of their own. An example of the personal interaction of student with the and text arises out of a reading of Zimbardo's (2008) *Lucifer Effect*, which holds that situational factors are likely to influence the behaviour of people—regardless of their values. This is contrary to the belief of many students who feel that they will stick to their values despite the situation. The shocking example of the experiments that demonstrate the power of situational influence invokes a strong emotional response from students, who provide examples and arguments regarding whether they would be swayed by situational forces as suggested by Zimbardo. It also brings home to the students the value of consciously knowing one's values and knowing how to resist situational forces.

The emotional intelligence component (described in detail above) of the course requires that students become aware of their dream or ideal self and current self. This involves exploring questions of personal values and life decisions where values are either explicitly or implicitly expressed. Badaracco's

(1997) *Defining Moments* proposes that in order to make decisions we must first ask ourselves: “Who am I?” (p. 13). Further, he dedicates a chapter to discuss how individuals become who they are through facing value questions that reveal, test, and shape who they are. To become more deliberate about the choices one makes, Badaracco (1997) recommends the individual ask four questions of him or her-self:

How do my feelings and instincts define the dilemma? Which of the responsibilities and values in the conflict have the deepest roots in my life and in communities, I care about? Looking to the future, what is *my way*? And how can expediency and shrewdness, along with imagination and boldness, move me toward the goals I care about most strongly? (p. 82)

These questions are designed to be addressed together because they balance one another and limit the negative consequences of considering each one alone (Badaracco, 1997). This text integrates with the emotional intelligence and contemplative component of the course as the first question is supported by exercises to increase student’s emotional awareness and the second and third question relates to the emotional intelligence exercise that asks students to develop a dream or vision for themselves. Because students have widely different cultural and personal experiences, it becomes apparent to many students that the foundation of values is driven by these contexts and personal experiences, an understanding that is consistent with virtue ethics. For example, students may have diametrically opposing views on a given reading but because they have participated in a conversation about their cultural and personal history

and because there is a context of openness provided by Canadian culture, the institution, and the class, the student is open to consider values that differ from her or his personal experience. In general, *Defining Moments* provides a context for students to discuss and debate experiences, reasoning processes, and emotions regarding the value choices they have made. In addition, it provides an opportunity to apply the emotional intelligence and contemplative components of the class to values experiences and questions.

It is my hope that a more thorough evaluation of the course impact on students' ethics can be conducted. Shortcomings of this course are that it is only six weeks in length whereas ethics is a life-long learning process. It is difficult to judge whether the course has an impact on students' ethical behaviour six months, a year, or five years down the road. I am particularly interested in the contribution that the emotional intelligence and contemplative exercises make in this respect.

## **Looking to the Future**

### **Action Research**

Drawing on the research of the preceding chapters and the initial application work I have attempted, I propose three steps to implementing ethics education in business schools. The first is to offer students a curriculum similar to the one outlined in this chapter in a 12-week format and conduct an evaluation of its impact on student's moral life. As I note above, class duration of six weeks with three hour sessions a week is too short to have a substantial and long lasting

impact, and I believe that even 12 weeks is insufficient. The second step is to evaluate the individual class approach as a way of informing the third step—an implementation of the ideal suggested under the heading below: A Proposed Comprehensive Approach to Ethics Education of Business Leaders.

### **Further Conceptual Research**

According to the *Huainanzi* (Major et al, 2010), becoming aware of one's innate nature is a critical component of ethical development. This view, however, was not explored in this thesis in any depth beyond reporting the observations made by the Daoists. I believe there are parallels between this concept and Goleman et al.'s (2002) concept of discovering one's ideal self and MacIntyre's (1984) notion of human nature as it could be if it realized its purpose or *telos*. There appears to be a psychological foundation to the concept of innate nature, innate moral evaluative capability, and the desire to move, grow, or learn in certain directions as dictated by one's innate sensibilities. As well, Panksepp (2009) stated that we are born with "ancestral memories" of emotions which are "successful solutions to living, encoded in genetically dictated brain systems" and "(H)ow these raw emotional tools, provided by Mother Nature, link up to world events is of momentous importance for lived lives" (p. 6). There may be a parallel between Panksepp's observations and the Daoists, who also held that we have innate natures that move us and that it is necessary to return to this innate nature in order to develop virtue and be content.

Trevarthen (2009) made two related observations with respect to human nature and the psychology of infants:

The growing life of children is protected by *powerful moral and aesthetic feelings* that assist them to learn in companionship with adults, to gain from their larger experience, and to become actors with adults in a meaningful world, with its conventional likes and dislikes and demanding practical tasks. (p. 56, italics added)

He further observed that:

[L]earning about persons and things plays an essential creative role, but there is a strong and willing foundation of motives and innate emotions that animate and evaluate learning. In a way, that is what I mean by movement how we are animated by innate motives and emotions. (p. 56).

Greene (2005), a neuroscientist who has contributed to the understanding of how the brain functions regarding moral issues observed that “the form of human moral thought is importantly shaped by the innate structure of the human mind and that some basic, pro-social tendencies probably provide human morality with innate content” (p. 18). However, he cautioned not to be completely taken in by the naturalist approach for “nature has its quirks and flaws” (Greene, 2005, p. 18). In any case, the foregoing observations suggest a need to give deeper consideration to the role and structure of innate nature than was provided in this thesis.

Chapter seven explored two concepts that may contribute to ethics education. First, it was suggested that human beings are intrinsically endowed with a transformative capability that can be enabled through creating conditions enabling brain changes associated with regulation of emotions and other broader

effects such as enhanced learning abilities and physical and psychological health. This is pedagogically significant as it may provide an additional resource to cognitive behavioural education in support of ethics education. Second, while it has not been empirically verified, contemplative practices may contribute to higher levels of moral functioning. These topics deserve further investigation at the conceptual level and through action research.

Another issue that has not been explored in any depth is the influence of moral exemplars. Csikszentmihalyi and Ivanhoe noted: “Western philosophers, even those who work on the issues of character and the virtues, do not have anything quite like the Chinese notion of virtue” (1999, p. 36). They further noted that the concern of western philosophers is to consider the characteristics and nature of the “various excellences of character—not as a power that can affect others” (1999, p.232), which is worthwhile considering. To elaborate, Daoists held that those with a high level of virtue affect others in two ways: their very presence attracts people who want to be near them, as they feel comfortable, and second they have a therapeutic affect on others (Csikszentmihalyi & Ivanhoe, 1999). The presence of a virtuous person “helps to put people at ease and enables them to become aware of their inauthentic behaviour and attitudes” (1999, p. 246). A virtuous person motivates people to become more authentic and virtuous. This has implications for the moral standards and education of business leaders who are exemplars, and it has implications in terms of how one addresses group dynamics and the ethical capacity of individuals within the group. I believe that the role of exemplars as understood by the Daoists and



Confucians will shed light on this important component of ethical development, and it should be investigated further.

## **A Proposed Comprehensive Approach to Ethics Education of Business Leaders**

Chapter two proposed an outline for ethics education of teachers that was based on an application of virtue ethics in the form of emotional intelligence supported by contemplation. In subsequent chapters, it was argued that these concepts were applicable to ethics education of business leaders and they have been implemented in a single course as discussed above. It is my view that a single course as described above is inadequate for effective ethics education. Subject to positive results of research conducted on the approach to teaching in single classes, I provide below a modified version of the guidelines offered in chapter two to learning communities interested in implementing business ethics pedagogy. Following the list, I expand on the points that suggest the need for more than a few classes, which I believe has significant implications for the effectiveness of developing ethics in a business school context. The guidelines presented in chapter two were as follows:

1. Clearly define the purpose of the ethics program consistent with virtue ethics.
2. Require that all students participate in the program.
3. Ensure that those selected to lead and teach the program are ethical exemplars who have strong emotional intelligence.
4. Support students' development of their life purpose.

5. Provide training and space for contemplative practices.
6. Include teaching of theory and practice of ethics.
7. Include teaching the theory and practice of developing one's emotional intelligence as part of its program.
8. Provide support for ethics education throughout the students' studies at university.
9. Provide a positive community where students can explore their inner lives and ethical dilemmas.

Points 8 and 9 speak to issues that go beyond what can be accomplished in a single class or several classes and address concerns identified in chapters two and seven where it was observed that developing ethical expertise is a transformational process requiring study, self-reflection, practice and time. It is my view that the university should set the stage for lifelong ethical learning. Therefore, point 8 proposes that support be provided for ethics education throughout the student's involvement with the university. Students could be required to take a full term introductory ethics course in their first year followed by half a course once a year thereafter to provide the intellectual framework for ethics, and this could be augmented by incorporating ethics into regular classes where appropriate.

Point 9 addresses another significant issue identified in chapter two, and that is that development of ethics is a difficult process due to our cultural and institutional norms that overemphasize competition and external goods such as possessions, power, wealth, and fame (Vokey, in press). Chapter seven noted

that neuroscience and psychology suggests that ethics are best developed within a positive supportive environment. Thus, point 9 suggests the development of a supportive and cooperative community, where ethical expertise can be developed through an emphasis on self-reflection, contemplation, and practice based on the ethical issues students bring to the community. In keeping with the concept that students are encouraged to develop virtues or what chapter two calls internal goods such as honesty, courage, and wisdom, students could be provided incentives to participate and disincentives for not participating. However, they would not be graded. A certain number of hours of participation per term and evidence of engagement in the program would be required to obtain a pass.

A model of this concept is available in the form of TEC: (Senior Executives Working together), which is designed to assist executives to develop leadership abilities through:

Focusing on an individual's professional and personal leadership goals with an accomplished group leader who is an expert facilitator, trusted business advisor and mentor. Connecting with a diverse, unbiased and trusted group of successful peers committed to helping advance your business. Drawing on the first-hand experience and wisdom of peers to improve critical thinking skills. Obtaining direct honest feedback from group members while holding each other accountable and advocating for mutual success. (TEC Canada, 2011, p. 1)

While TEC is designed to assist individuals develop business leadership skills, it appears that significant features of the concept could be applied to assist business school students as they develop ethical capability, including: providing an ethical exemplar with strong facilitation skills, working with peers in a confidential setting to advance one's ethical capability, drawing on first-hand experience and wisdom of peers to improve ethical critical thinking skills, obtaining direct honest feedback from group members while holding each other accountable, and advocating for mutual success in ethical learning and endeavours.

### **Parting Thought**

I began this thesis with the question: How do we become ethical human beings? The short answer was through a finely attuned integration of mind, body, heart, and spirit. Indeed, there appears to be a positive response to teaching based on such an approach. Perhaps the answer lies in an anonymous African proverb that states, "If you want to go quickly, go alone; If you want to go far, go together." It seems to me that we need to learn how to integrate our mind, body, heart, and spirit to be ethical beings, and together with others, we will go a long way.

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