

Four Principles

The Principle of **Goodwill**



The meaning of good

The basic meaning of 'goodwill' can be known by understanding the meaning of the words, 'good' and 'will'.

'Will' is an intention and an energy to initiate, create, or work at achieving something. This will is 'good' when the intended goal is for something 'good', or 'for the good'. In other words, when one's will is for achieving something good, then this is goodwill. Thus, goodwill is a will that is for-the-good, or a 'will-to-good'.

But then, what is 'good'? This is a more difficult word to define, because there are many kinds of good. First, we can distinguish two types of good: Intrinsic Good and instrumental good.

Intrinsic Good, like an intrinsic value, means something is good in and of itself, without needing any other something to justify it. It is self-evidently and intuitively known to be good, rather than needing a process of reasoning to know it is good. Intrinsic Good is also called an Ultimate Good or an Absolute Good.

Instrumental good, different from Intrinsic Good, is anything or any action that effectively leads to an Intrinsic Good. That is, an instrumental good is something that is instrumental towards an Ultimate Good. Therefore, once we know or decide what is an Intrinsic Good, then whatever effectively leads to this is an instrumental good. In a sense, an instrumental good is a practical way to achieve an Intrinsic Good, which is derived by reasoning.

Applying these basic types of good to the meaning of good-will, most would agree that goodwill is an instrumental good, rather than an intrinsic good, since it is not self-evidently good in itself. That is, goodwill can be rationally regarded as a value, or ethic, because it is instrumental for achieving various Intrinsic Good, such as love, harmony, happiness, and well-being in the world.

Ultimate Values and the Greater Good

Intrinsic Good can be distinguished in two ways:

(a) the Ultimate Values in life, and (b) the Greater Good of all.

Ultimate Values are the self-evident intrinsic values of our life, the qualities of life and the qualities of being that we most value and cherish. They are the most valued Qualities in life; such as happiness, health, harmony, love, enjoyment, beauty, wisdom, and creative freedom.

The Greater Good refers to 'what's good for the whole', or good for the larger group or larger world, and this is regarded as an ultimate Moral Value or Ultimate Good. The Greater Good is also called the 'Good of the whole', the 'Overall Good', and the 'Common Good'. This suggests that what is ultimately Good is that which is good for everyone, or good for the greater whole.

Thus, the Greater Good can be understood as an ultimate Value in itself, as well as an ultimate goal for ethical action; so that if an action effectively 'leads to' the Greater Good, then this is a 'good action' or a 'good result', and if one has an intention to act for the Greater Good, then this is a 'good intention'. Likewise, if a personal quality is helpful to 'the good of the greater whole', then this is a 'good quality'. And likewise, if one's thoughts are beneficial to the Greater Good, or helpful for the Common Good, then these 'good thoughts'. So, to think of the good of the whole, or to act for the good of the whole, is itself intrinsically Good.

Also, if we combine these two meanings of the Ultimate Good, then the Ultimate Good can be understood as the highest Values and Qualities of life, yet these have to be enjoyed by everyone, such that 'what is good' cannot just be something 'good for me' or good for just my group; rather, the Ultimate Good has to be good for everyone, for all of life and for the greater whole. Yet, even though the needs of the whole are more important than personal interests, the Values of each person still need respect.

Ultimate Values and Qualities of life

As self-reflecting human beings, we each can realize what are the Ultimate Values in life, or decide what is 'most important'. Yet our realization of Ultimate Values will probably not occur suddenly all at once, but instead will require many periods of thoughtful consideration and self-reflection, and this can even become an ongoing life question, as in 'what is most important?' Thus, over time and sincere reflection, we will gradually become more certain about the Ultimate Values and Goals of life.

Then, once these Ultimate Values are realized, or decided, they become reference points for making decisions about what to do or how to be in life. For now that one knows what is most valued and important in life, one can then ask 'how to achieve this Aim', and one can use practical reasoning to understand the needed steps or efforts to achieve those great Aims or Ultimate Values.

So, once we have a clearer idea about life's Ultimate Values, Goals, or Purposes, then we can use our practical reasoning to know what is instrumental or effective for achieving these. Additionally, we can think of a multitude of 'instrumental values' which are needed or beneficial for achieving the Ultimate Values. These instrumental-values can include beneficial 'ways of being', or self-qualities, which help nurture the greater Ultimate Values.

Now, to apply this to goodwill, we can think of goodwill as an instrumental-value, because it is beneficial or instrumental for achieving the highest Values and Qualities of life, such as love, harmony, peace, and enjoyment in all our relations. So, goodwill is not an end-in-itself, but it is very definitely instrumental for achieving the highest and greatest Values of life, in our personal relations and in the world. However, goodwill is a quality that is intrinsic in our true nature, our humanness, our soul, our being. So, in addition to having an instrumental value in life, goodwill is nonetheless an intrinsic quality within our own being, our soul.

The Greater Good

The Greater Good is itself an Intrinsic Good, an end in itself, a Great Goal, an Ultimate Goal. It is what is good for the whole, good for the group, or good for everyone, nature and world. This Greater Good becomes the Ultimate Goal for our ethical decisions and actions.

A Greater Good is more inclusive than just the good-for-oneself or for one's own 'personal good'. The Greater Good is for the larger whole and is a good greater than one's own desired good.

There are many spheres of 'the larger whole'; such as family, group, community, nation, humanity, and the ecologies of life. Each relation and wholeness could be the Greater Good, while the greatest wholeness of all is all of life, humanity and planet.

The Greater Good can also be understood as the Common Good, the good that is common to everyone, or the values/goals we all share in common, and this common good can even become our ultimate Moral Goal, or 'moral compass', or moral rule to live by.

The Greater Good can also be understood as that which benefits the most, or that which is most fair for all involved, in all our relationships within our common humanity and ecology. And in this larger and more encompassing perspective of what is Good, our aim is to benefit the larger whole and the common good, rather than just thinking that 'the good' is just about one's own self-interests or just about the interests of one's particular group.

We can also think of the Greater Good as the most positive and mutually beneficial values that can be achieved in a social group, a community, a nation, or the whole world. These Values can also be understood as 'humanistic values' or as 'spiritual values'. In spiritual terms, when we nurture these positive and mutually beneficial Values, for the good of the whole, we are working for the Greater Good of God and we are serving the Divine Purpose.

What is goodwill?

- Goodwill is a will that is oriented towards the good and doing what one believes is good.
- Goodwill is a will oriented towards the good of others or towards a greater purpose.
- Goodwill is a will to nurture or create what is good, right, or best.
- Goodwill is a will motivated by love, empathy, and caring.
- Goodwill is a will to bring love, caring and givingness into all relations.
- Goodwill is a will-to-love, will-to-help, and will-to-heal.
- Goodwill is an expression of love, compassion, caring, and givingness.
- Goodwill seeks to express and manifest good qualities, good values, and good outcomes.
- People of goodwill are those who think and act with loving understanding and concern for the well-being of all.

Some qualities of goodwill

- respect and consideration
- truthfulness and trustworthiness
- tolerance and forgiveness
- caring and helpfulness
- sharing and givingness
- cooperation and collaboration
- self-responsibility for expressing goodwill

What 'good' does goodwill do?

Some positive effects of goodwill:

- Goodwill nurtures harmony and unity in human relations.
- Goodwill nurtures communication, sharing, and understanding.
- Goodwill resonates in others and improves any relationship or situation.
- Goodwill builds trust and unity, while healing distrust, division, or conflict.
- Goodwill solves problems and heals conflicts, and an attitude of goodwill can be maintained even when there is disagreement or conflict.

Goodwill creates a social atmosphere nurturing good-relations. It creates an atmosphere of love, friendship, peace, and trust. It creates an atmosphere of caring, concern, and helpfulness. And in this atmosphere of goodwill, closeness, sharing, healing, and creativity are nurtured. Goodwill also nurtures a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, in which problems are solved and conflicts are healed.

An outward expression of Goodwill can help those in need and solve problems in the world – such as environmental, world health, water and food, human rights and fairness, conflicts and violence, and promote a world of peace, caring, and cooperation. But an outward expression of goodwill in the world is not merely a giving of food, water, and health to those in need; for the best goodwill also helps people build security, good relations, self-reliance, and a fair economic system. Though, in addition to an outward goodwill, we can express goodwill through our thoughts, feelings, intentions, and attitude.

Having a good-will

A good-will is *oriented towards* the Good, and it benefits others.

It is when one's will is for the greater good and the good of others. In contrast, a selfish-will is oriented towards mere self-serving interests. This is what marks goodwill from what is not goodwill. The interests of a good-will are more expansive and inclusive, than just one's own self-interests.

A good-will is a *will to express* and manifest good in any situation.

A good-will is *directed towards* expressing and manifesting good values, good qualities, and good outcomes.

A good-will *comes from* love. It is an active energy of love, which comes from one's heart and sincerity. It is love in action.

A good-will is *motivated by* love, empathy, and caring.

A good-will is *nurtured by* a sensitivity to the feelings and needs of others. For if one has no sensitivity, then there is no empathy, love or caring, and consequently one does not have goodwill.

Thus, a good-will is loving, empathetic and caring, and with good intention to help others, or to serve the common good. It is not a selfish-will, with selfish motives or plans that are mostly concerned with one's own self interests and success.

Good-will is a natural quality of our heart, a quality of our soul. It is our natural heart-soul response of caring and helpfulness to whatever is needed in any situation, and it includes many other qualities of the soul as well.

A person with goodwill awakened in their heart can encourage and nurture goodwill in others, but no one should force anyone to express goodwill, because this can produce a reactive disdain for goodwill and givingness. So it is best to nurture goodwill by one's own example and to spark the other's own self-recognition of the good-will that is already latent within their soul.

Expressing goodwill requires the mind

Goodwill necessarily involves the heart, but it also involves the will and the mind, and all three work together to produce intelligent and loving goodwill in action.

Goodwill comes from the heart, expressing as our desire to help others and our wishing good to others. Goodwill is an inspiration from the heart to do something good for others or to serve a need in the world around us. This is the feeling aspect of goodwill, or the emotional aspect.

Goodwill comes from the will. It is our will to give attention and energy to something that is good, and it is our will to persevere past any obstacles. This is the outgoing aspect of goodwill, the manifesting expression of goodwill.

Also, goodwill comes from the mind. Because even if we have goodwill in our heart and intention, we still need the mind to know the needs of goodwill and how to express it.

We need our intellect to answer some important questions concerning goodwill, such as:

- What is good?
- What are the expressive qualities of goodwill?
- Where are the needs of our goodwill?
- What exactly can we do?

We need to know where and how to express goodwill in the world of relationships and situations, and this will require the mind and intellect. It will require some thinking and thoughtful meditation. Thus, the mind is needed in order to give direction to the energy of goodwill, and to discern where and how to best give one's energy. As well, the mind includes our intuition and discernment of what is most important. Practical reasoning will inform us of our common needs and what is the common good. But Intuition will inform us of the highest and most sincere Values, Qualities, Purposes. Intuition knows what are Ultimate Values. It knows what cannot be known by reason.

This is also called the Higher-mind, the Spiritual-mind, the Intuitive-mind, or the ethical intuition. We can learn

from teachers about what is ultimately Good, including the spiritual qualities, such as goodwill. But it is only by Intuition that we can truly know an ultimate Good or a soul Quality.

And only by Intuition can we acquire a Vision of goodwill, manifesting through the qualities of cooperation, sharing, collaboration, and practical brotherhood. An example of such a Vision might be seeing how goodwill is expressing through people, motivated by love, and actively manifesting in all relations between people, nations, and ecology, thus building a united human family and a united whole world. Seeing this vision gives us an opportunity to participate in the spiritual evolution of the world.

Also, we can use creative meditation for the manifestation of goodwill, applying the power of thought and visualization, to inspire the ideal and quality of goodwill in all humanity.

First, spend some time thinking about what goodwill is and the qualities important for expressing it. This is a period of thoughtful reflection to clarify our understanding of goodwill. Then, enter into an experience or feeling of having goodwill, and know this to be a true quality of your being, your soul. Stay in this experience for awhile. Then, radiate, resonate, visualize and feel goodwill permeate the whole world and unfold from the heart, mind, and will of every person. Stay steady in this for a while, meditating goodwill into the world.

Five ways to express goodwill

There are five ways, or modes, by which we can experience and express the quality of goodwill. These are: attitude, intention, thought, feeling, and outward expression. The first four of these are the subjective aspects of goodwill, in complement to the objective aspect of outward expression. The subjective aspects, though not outwardly visible, are nonetheless ways by which we can express goodwill.

The first aspect, or mode, of goodwill is *an attitude* of goodwill. This is a distinct attitude that one can have in the world, or in life. It is a 'way of being', or an 'orientation' in life, which is to be loving and giving, caring and helpful. This goodwill attitude, this orientation in life, is often motivated by a sense of purpose. And this attitude of goodwill can be recognized in a person's outward expression.

A second aspect of goodwill is *an intention* of goodwill. This is the intention with which one approaches the world. Intention can be also understood as the inner aspect of 'will'. For example, the inner aspect of goodwill is a good-intention, while the outer aspect of goodwill is its outward expression.

These aspects of attitude and intention are often experienced together, which could be called a person's attitude-intention. For example, my attitude in life could include an intention to have goodwill towards others, and my intention in life could include maintaining an attitude of goodwill towards others. This combined attitude and intention creates an atmosphere that helps solve problems, heal conflicts and resolve issues.

The third aspect of goodwill is *a thought* of goodwill. This is a 'thought of good' upon others. One's thought is for the goodwill of others. This 'goodwill thought' can be directed generally to all humanity and all life, or it can be directed specifically towards someone, a group, or a circumstance.

A fourth aspect of an any quality is its *feeling*; as for example,

a feeling of goodwill about someone or something, as in 'I care', or 'I want to help', either specifically or generally.

The thought and the feeling aspects of goodwill usually express together in combination. For example, a 'thought of goodwill' is usually together with a 'feeling of goodwill', which radiates into the social environment. This combination can thus be called a 'thought-feeling' of goodwill. A good-will is when one's thoughts and hopes for others are for their good. Also, when thought and feeling are unified, one thinks and responds from the heart.

A thought-feeling of goodwill could also be a 'good wish' for the good of others. This wish is a feeling from one's heart, and it is also a thought directed towards others or for the whole world. Similarly, a thought-feeling of goodwill might be expressed as a prayer, or as an intended blessing, for the good, well-being, and healing of others. For example, I wish others well, or I pray for their well-being and healing.

This thought-feeling radiates and vibrates into the atmosphere of any relationship or circumstance, creating an atmosphere of love and friendship, and giving people a feeling of being loved and cared for. Thus, these thought-feelings of goodwill have a great power to transform and improve relationships or situations. Others can recognize our thoughts and feelings of goodwill, and they will appreciate this. In addition, people may also recognize one's attitude and intention of goodwill.

The fifth aspect of goodwill is its outward *expression*, which is good-will in action. This is how we actually manifest goodwill in the world, or in our relations. It is how we express our love, care, and givingness to others, and other virtues of goodwill, such as kindness, respect, helpfulness, and cooperation.

The giving of goodwill

So let us ask ourselves, how can I give goodwill into the world? There are two main types of goodwill, outward and inward.

Outward expressions are such as charity, gifting, donations, community work, and other unconditional service for others. For example, in global service a person or group might bring food, clean water, healthcare, peace and security, or deal with more complex and difficult problems, such as the environment, human rights, safety, peace, and economics, while also making sure the solution is sustainable, intelligent, and long lasting. What is common to all of these outward expressions of goodwill is that each is free unconditional givingness, without expecting anything in return.

Inward expressions of goodwill are from our feelings, thoughts, intentions, and attitude. These are subjective activities, rather than outward activities, but this kind of goodwill is also effective.

So how can I give goodwill in this inward subjective way?

The first way is to give goodwill through my heart, my love, and my caring; bringing healing, peace, love, and friendship. The second way is through my mind and thought; sending out good wishes for everyone, and thinking the best for everyone. A combined way is the thought-feeling of love to everyone, or I can radiate out one of the other qualities of goodwill.

Another way of inwardly expressing goodwill is through my good intention, which is to give and do what I can towards what is good, best, or right. And the other way is through my attitude of having a good will towards everyone and giving what I can. Then, as a way of life, my attitude-intention will be for the good of all, of everyone I meet, all my relations, and all of the world.

All of these are inner ways to express the 'energy of goodwill', which then resonates and radiates into all of humanity.

Affirmations of Goodwill

When people of goodwill consciously affirm what they believe in and also affirm their intentions of goodwill, these affirmations of belief and intention will: (a) unite each person with all those who have the same beliefs and intentions, and (b) focus the mind on these truths and intentions to empower and send them forth, if we use these affirmations as seed ideas for creative meditation.

We believe in –

- the potential of love and goodness in every soul
- the interrelated unity of humanity and the whole Earth
- one human family which can live in peace and harmony
- the power of goodwill to build good relations
- the power of goodwill to help solve problems
- the power of goodwill to bring love in the world

Also, we accept our responsibility for creating good relations, between people, groups, nations, and all of life. We also accept the fundamental value of the common good, but also affirm the fundamental freedom of the human spirit, the creative freedom of each person, and that all people should be free to think, choose, and act according to their own values and beliefs.

Our intention is to –

- practice goodwill in all relationships and activities
- build good relations between all persons and groups
- care for the creatures and ecosystems of Earth
- creatively solve problems and resolve conflicts
- bring light, love and goodwill into all humanity

Goodwill in the world

Goodwill will become a new orientation in humanity, producing positive social changes in this coming age of holistic thinking, and in a spirit of goodwill, problems of the world will be solved. For the quality of goodwill inspires helpful creative solutions for the betterment of communities, relations, and the world.

Goodwill is a central spiritual quality of every human being. Some people self-recognize and express this, and some do not. But all throughout the world are people and groups of goodwill, working towards positive solutions to the problems of poverty, violence, environmental destruction, and other global problems.

Each group with goodwill is part of the larger global network, which is first a subjective network, and second it is outward. Networks grow larger and more in unison when groups connect in cooperation. And when these networks unite with others, an even larger network is formed, and finally a global network, consisting of all people and groups of goodwill, connected and united by their common purpose to help the spiritual evolution and divine unfoldment of all humanity and help solve the needs of our common humanity and our common earth ecosystem.

Goodwill is already strong in the world, in all cultures, religions, and communities, creating a new world of sharing, cooperation, and good relations, in a holistic attitude of caring for the whole. And goodwill can be found in all sorts of fields and professions.

Leadership and responsibility are needed in the manifestation of goodwill, and when a person or group accepts responsibility for goodwill in the world, expanding opportunities will open up.

More inwardly, goodwill can be generated in the world through meditation – on understanding goodwill, experiencing goodwill, visualizing goodwill, or radiating goodwill out into the world.

Spheres of goodwill

The energy of goodwill goes outward from each 'centre' into their various kinds of relationships and generally into the world.

A centre of goodwill is any person or group, who thinks, feels, and expresses the qualities of goodwill. This energy of goodwill can be in the form of a thought, a feeling, or an activity.

Each centre of goodwill can also be known as a 'centre of will', which radiates out the qualities of goodwill, like a lighthouse. And we can even think of our own good-will as a 'point of will' within the Universal Will, the Divine Will, or the Will of God.

This energy of goodwill, radiated and expressed outward from its centre, will have positive effects in many spheres of relations, including one's close relations and the various social groups of which one belongs. These positive effects of our goodwill energy also reach many other people and groups of whom we know not, because this energy radiates through the whole mental sphere of humanity.

Thus, we each have various spheres of relations, ranging from personal to larger social groups and finally to the whole world which includes humanity and the ecosystems of all life. So our radiance and activity of goodwill requires an inclusive holistic intelligence, which has consideration for all these many spheres of relationship, including the various needs of each sphere.

If we ask ourselves, what goodwill can I do? or what can I do for the world?, we will find that our opportunities to outwardly help are limited, such that our first sphere for outward opportunities is in our own personal life, circumstances, and relationships, followed then by the spheres of community, region and nation. But our expressions of goodwill can also come from our heart and our thoughts, which emanate out into these various spheres and even into the whole world of all humanity and all of life.

Giving and receiving

In a positive and mutually beneficial relation, there will be an interplay of giving and receiving, in an attitude of sharing. An ideal relationship has a reciprocity of giving and receiving, but a perfect balance of equality reciprocity cannot be expected.

So the better attitude to have, in any relation, is to just be giving, without expecting any reciprocity. This is an unconditional and freely-giving attitude of goodwill, which is to just think about how to help and give to others, without needing to think about what they will give in return.

Thus, the ideal relation is when there is a balance of reciprocity and mutual benefit, but in a spirit of goodwill there is no concern for what we should receive from this relation. Of course though in practical economic exchanges, we do make agreements about what is expected in this exchange, but there may be times when one side will have a greater need to receive or have little to give.

An attitude of 'what's in this for me?', or 'what will you give me?' may seem natural in a world of self-interest or competitive edge, but the attitude and expression of goodwill transcends all that. This is the difference between a loving-giving attitude and a selfish-taking attitude.

So in a spirit of goodwill, we should not always expect or demand a perfect equivalency in this exchange of giving and receiving. For at times, one side of the relation will be in greater need, while the other side will have less need and more to share. Thus, in a spirit of goodwill, the wealthier people, nations, and businesses would ideally share more freely with those in need. Also, this goodwill attitude of giving to those with a greater need will actually turn out beneficial to the giving ones, because their givingness will benefit the larger system of exchange, as the weaker segments of the system will become more able to give.

An attitude of goodwill in groups

An attitude of goodwill is especially beneficial in group relations involving social discussions, meetings, or plans for group-work. This attitude of goodwill is distinctly different from the attitude of fighting with others or trying to dominate others with one's own viewpoint or self-interest. The attitude of goodwill is first of all motivated by a love and caring for others and the group. Second, the attitude of goodwill is cooperative and collaborative. It is a will to work-with others for a common goal, rather than compete with or fight with others for one's own self-interests.

With an attitude of goodwill, common ground can be discovered and constructive solutions can be realized. And with a shared attitude of goodwill, conflicts can be resolved between opposing viewpoints or interests. Also with shared goodwill, the common good, or the 'good of the group', is significantly important; yet the viewpoints, values and interests of each person also need to be respected, because it is important to not squash the individual spirit of free and creative thinking, and individual free choice.

Group discussion, with a shared attitude of goodwill, can help solve problems and conflicts. Here are some key suggestions:

- 1) examine all aspects of the problem and from multiple angles
- 2) allow and listen to each person's viewpoint and ideas
- 3) everyone is open-minded but can also question or disagree
- 4) discuss points of agreement, common interests and goals
- 5) discuss points of disagreement, confusions, or uncertainties
- 6) be willing to make compromises on some points or issues
- 7) give more importance to broad and long-term goals
- 8) agree on common goals and practical steps to achieve these

Negative expressions of the will

The opposite of having a good-will is having a bad-will, but this would be mean to say of those who simply lack a self-recognition of the goodwill that is latent in them, or those who just do not know how to express goodwill. There are some people who might have a bad-will towards certain others, or who have a prejudice against certain kinds of people; but generally, a lack of goodwill in expression is the result of selfishness or self-centeredness.

The human will, which is actually a spiritual gift, can be misused; as for example, the will to rule over others or manipulate others. And unfortunately, many people with a strong-will have not also had a caring and compassionate will, or a will towards the good of others and the natural world, and they have used their power of will to selfishly dominate over those with a less developed will. A strong will is not something bad, but it needs to be balanced by love and compassion and a thinking about the needs of others. Goodwill has to combine the triad of will, love, and intelligence.

Goodwill is already latent in our soul, but often unrecognized. Our soul is our natural self, our true being, but this can become covered with artificial layers of forces, concepts and images, or else covered by our own emotional habits and reactions. Thus, the person might not realize their soul until later in life. Consequentially, the person also does not realize their goodwill.

For in the early years, each person is learning and conditioned from their society, culture, parents, school, and the media. In addition, their lower centres tend to drive the patterns of their personal character and behavior. Thus, there are many external and internal forces to dominate one's consciousness and rule over the subtler energies and qualities of the soul. This effectively covers and blocks the soul from consciousness, and thus also the consciousness of one's inherent goodwill.

The need for self-work

To promote, nurture and implement goodwill, one needs to first untie and resolve various obstacles to its expression, which will require ongoing self-observation, self-awareness, and self-work, in order to recognize those obstacles hidden from ordinary view.

These obstacles include self-centeredness, group-centeredness, prejudice, intolerance, resentment, selfishness, greed, and fear. The elimination of these requires a practice of self-observation, along with being open-minded, rather than closed-minded or fixated on one's own specific beliefs. Then, once these obstacles are lessened, it is possible for love and goodwill to blossom.

However, to lessen or dissolve these obstacles is not an easy task, which is why there is a need for self-observation and self-work. Once this is recognized, one has to make a commitment to this ongoing process of self-transformation, requiring self-effort.

Negative attitudes, preconceptions, and reactive patterns are dissolved with self-awareness, reason and discernment, as well as by a positive cultivation of the qualities found in one's soul, such as compassion, love, caring, goodwill, and helpfulness.

These methods for transmuting negative personality patterns and replacing these with soul qualities can be applied in daily life and at all times, but this can also be achieved in meditation, because energies are transmuted in the process of meditation, and in meditation one can consciously dissolve the negative patterns, while recognizing and developing the soul qualities.

For example, in meditation one can consciously reflect upon and intentionally develop the quality of goodwill in oneself, while also transmuting any negative thoughts or emotions, and this self-work in meditation will carry into one's daily life. As well, one can radiate goodwill into the world, which is itself self-transforming and transmuting of negative self-energies.

Meditating on Goodwill

Questions for reflective inquiry on Goodwill

1. what does *goodwill* mean, or what is goodwill?
2. how would I explain *goodwill*?
3. how is *goodwill* expressed or manifested?
4. what are some expressive qualities of *goodwill*?
5. what is the importance of *goodwill*?
6. what are some positive effects of *goodwill*?
7. what are some first steps to achieve *goodwill*?
8. what is my own responsibility in *goodwill*?

Prayers of Goodwill (to reflect upon and visualize)

- may everyone in my surroundings be blessed
- may everyone realize and express their inner goodwill
- may everyone realize the importance of goodwill

Visualizations of Goodwill

- visualize all people having goodwill for everyone else
- visualize all groups and nations having goodwill
- visualize yourself expressing Goodwill in all relations
- visualize a symbol of goodwill:
 - an image of people giving food and other gifts
 - an image of children sharing in friendship

Affirmations of Goodwill (to reflect upon and affirm)

- in my heart I have goodwill for all humanity and all of life
- my will is for the good in all circumstances
- I will strive to express goodwill all of the time

Radiate Goodwill out into the whole world

- from your heart, from your mind, and from your will

Qualities of Goodwill to meditate upon

Meditate on one of these Qualities:

- reflect upon its meaning and value
- think about how to express it

- experience a feeling of it
- radiate out this Quality
through thought and being

Love	Responsibility
Caring	Service
Compassion	Generosity
Empathy	Nurturance
Respect	Cooperation
Consideration	Supportiveness
Kindness	Fairness
Friendliness	Trustworthiness
Helpfulness	Truthfulness
Givingness	Forgiveness
Sharing	Understanding
Charity	Unifying

The Principle of
Good Relations



The meaning of Good Relations

We should first clarify the basic meaning of 'good relations'. Good Relations is to be in a 'good' relationship with others, including all relations of humanity and all natural relations.

Yet, 'what is good?' And how do we know what is a 'good' relation and what is not? One way to know a good relation is if it has good qualities in it or if it nurtures good qualities, and these qualities are self-evidently known to be good by those in the actual relationship. So, the qualities that make a relation 'good' are known intuitively and self-evidently by the participants or experiencers in the relationship. These intuitively known good qualities are called intrinsically good qualities, and they form the basis for deciding or recognizing whether a relation is truly good. For example, intrinsically good qualities include enjoyment, love, caring, and any other qualities that are naturally desired in life.

Another way to determine whether a relation is 'good' is if it is mutually beneficial to everyone in the relation. A relation could be good for one person, or for one group, but in this second way of determining whether a relation is 'good' there is necessity for a *mutual experience* of it being good, rather than the relation being good for just one person or group, yet not for everyone. This kind of measurement for determining a 'good relation' is called the value of the Common Good, whereby a 'good relation' has to be good for *all those* in the relation. It has to be mutually beneficial for everyone involved in the relation.

Now, if we combine both of these ways to determine what is a good relation, then a good relation has or nurtures intrinsically good qualities *and* it is mutually beneficial to everyone in it. Another way to say this is that a good relation has or nurtures qualities that are experienced by everyone as beneficially good. Thus, in 'good relations' all those in the relation experience and are benefited by various intrinsically good qualities and values.

The Greater Good and Common Good

Intrinsically good qualities and values are the ultimate Goals for good relations, though the ultimate Goal is also that these qualities and values are shared and experienced by everyone, and thus everyone benefits from the relation.

Therefore, in good relations each member must consider the needs and hopes of all others in the relation, and each member should ideally strive towards being helpful and giving to all of the others. This intention and attitude of helping and giving to the others is how we can serve and improve the 'whole relation', or what could be called the Greater Good or the Common Good. Thus, good relations are nurtured and developed, when people interact for the greater good, the common good, or for the whole.

The attitude of 'serving the greater good' is when the overall good is greater and more important than just any person's own good. In this attitude, one serves the good of the greater relationship, and then the greater relationship of that relationship, and so on.

The 'common good' includes all of the intrinsically important needs and goals of each person and group in the overall relation. To serve or benefit the common good is to help fulfill the needs and goals of everyone in the relation, which then improves the overall good of the whole relation. So, as more needs and goals are fulfilled, the overall whole relation is improved and is better. Our common needs, goals and desires are the great qualities of life, such as enjoyment, harmony, beauty, and creative freedom.

The Greater Good and the Common Good can even become the Greater Goal of life, whereby one serves the Larger Wholeness, including the whole social and natural world. And one serves the Larger Wholeness by helping to fulfill the essential needs and nurture the very best qualities of each one in the relation.

Intrinsic and instrumental values

Good relations are usually regarded as an instrumental value, because good relations is instrumental towards achieving many of life's intrinsic values, such as happiness, peace and security. Yet, we would only regard relations as 'good' if they possessed intrinsically good qualities, such as peace, harmony, and love. Thus, being in good relations can be regarded as intrinsically good-in-itself.

Therefore the Ideal of Good Relations can either be understood as an instrumental value - because it leads to so many of life's ultimate values, or it can be understood as an intrinsic value that is just good in itself - since we would only regard relations as 'good' if and only if they possessed some intrinsic values.

In other words, we can understand the Ideal of Good Relations in these two ways; whereby (a) good-relations *nurtures* many of great Values and Qualities of life, or (b) good-relations *contains* many of the great Values and Qualities of life. Thus, it is true to say that good-relations nurtures the Life Values of harmony, peace, security, happiness, and overall well-being. Yet it is also true that good-relations *are* harmonious and peaceful relations.

We can also see that Good Relations serves the Common Good, as well as being beneficial to everyone involved. The better our relations are, the better is everyone involved. Our common goals and values, our common good, is served by better relations, with qualities such as cooperation, collaboration, caring and sharing. Similarly in nature, the common good, the good of the whole, is served by harmonious, cooperative, and nurturing relations, such that Good Relations are relations for the Common Good.

Right Relations

An alternative term for 'Good Relations' can be 'Right Relations'. However, in order to understand what Right Relations means, we need to have a definition in mind about the meaning of 'right', just as we need a definition of 'good' to know 'Good Relations'.

The meaning of *right relations* can be understood as either 'ethically-good' relations or 'practically-good' relations.

Ethically-good relations are relations which exemplify ethical standards, values, or principles. This is the meaning of 'right' in an ethical sense, whereby a 'right relation' will contain ethical qualities and values, such as respect, caring, goodwill, and love. Thus, various ethical qualities will determine whether a relation is a 'right relation'. Though, these same ethical qualities can also determine whether this is a 'good relation', because the term 'good' can also be understood in an ethical sense. Thus, we can use the term 'good relations' or use the term 'right relations', since both have this same ethical meaning.

The other meaning of 'right' is in a practical sense, in which a 'right relation' is a relation that effectively, instrumentally, or skillfully leads to higher, greater, ultimate Values or Goals. This is the practical or instrumental meaning of a 'right way', similar to 'skillful means' or a 'smart way' to achieve something. So in this sense, 'right relations' are well-functioning relations, which are effective for achieving common goals and values.

This practical meaning of 'right' is also in the meaning of 'good', as in 'a good way' to do something, wherein 'good' means useful, beneficial, efficient, or instrumental towards some kind of goal; such that a relation is 'good' if it helps achieve Ultimate Goals. Thus, 'good relations' and 'right relations' mean the same in this practical sense of 'good' and 'right'. And because these have the same meaning, we can use either one to describe ideal relations.

So, the terms 'right', 'right way', and 'right relations' have these two kinds of meaning: (a) skillful-smart-practical-effective, and

(b) ethical-caring-just-considerate. And the same is true for the terms 'good', 'good way', and 'good relations'.

Yet, one problem with the term 'right' is that it often has a connotation of 'absolutely right' or of just 'one right way'. So, if we choose to think of ideal-relations as 'right relations', we need to realize that 'right' is a relative term, rather than an absolute term, for we can only be in 'right relation' with others in a *relatively* perfect way, or in a way that is to some degree 'perfectly right'. Also, we should not assume that there is just 'one right way', or just one recipe for achieving right relations.

There is an implied polarity in the term 'right', as well as in the term 'good', as in 'right vs wrong' or 'good vs bad', though we have to still acknowledge that there are degrees of each, rather than think that a relation can only be 'right' or 'wrong'.

It is true that in any relation there are 'right ways' to relate and there are 'wrong ways' to relate, or there are 'good ways' and there are 'bad ways' to relate with others, which can be understood in either an ethical sense or in a practical sense.

For example, a 'right way' in a relation is a way that is helpful and nurturing for harmony, cooperation, love, and other values, while a 'wrong way' produces opposite effects and fails to achieve the higher Values and Goals of the relationship. So the concepts of right and wrong, good and bad, can be useful as orientations for how we relate with others. Yet nonetheless, we should not limit our understanding of 'right relations' to an absolute recipe.

Thus, the polarized concepts of right and wrong, good and bad, are useful for orienting our choices and actions in one direction vs the other. Yet for practical specific decisions, it makes more sense to speak of 'a better way', rather than 'the right way', in order to avoid the connotation of there being just one right way. So, in our practical life relationships and in our daily decisions, we could think of our practical goal as building 'better relations', while still maintaining the highest ideals and visions of a perfect relation, as best as we can envision this ideal or this potential.

Then, if 'better relations' is our practical goal, we will strive to be and express 'better' in any relation, and we will continuously search for better and improved ways of relating with others. Thus, 'better relations' is an alternative term for 'good relations' and 'right relations'.

However, all of these terms are very general and abstract, and they do not specifically explain the essential qualities involved in this Ideal, or the qualities necessary for manifesting the Ideal. So in order to truly understand good relations, right relations, better relations, or best relations, we need to know the qualities necessary for achieving that ideal. And as well, we need to know these essential qualities, in order to discern good relations from not-so-good relations.

To understand the essential qualities of a good, right, or better relation, or to at least know the qualities that will nurture this, it will be useful to reflect upon any of the following questions:

What constitutes a good relation?

What makes a relation good, or better?

What qualities are needed for a good relation?

What are some qualities that nurture or build a good relation?

So to *identify* good relations and also to *achieve* good relations requires us to intelligently think about the essential Principles and Qualities of good relations. Then, once we know these, we can discern between good relations and deficient relations. For example, we might realize that good relations have the qualities of respect, caring, helpfulness, and cooperation, and that these qualities will nurture and build good relations.

Ideal Qualities of Good Relations

(or qualities in a good relation)

1. Respect
2. Caring
3. Helpfulness
4. Givingness
5. Nurturance
6. Friendship
7. Collaboration
8. Harmony
9. Appreciation
10. Understanding
11. Honesty
12. Goodwill

The more of these qualities present in our relations, the better our relations will be. Yet ideally, these qualities are expressed by everyone in the relation and when each participant accepts their own responsibility for expressing these qualities.

An important principle for all participants is to nurture the good and the best in every relation, along with nurturing the natural potentials of each person or member in that relation.

Unfolding the Creative Divinity

The best we can do is to express those qualities that nurture harmonious and mutually cooperative relations, and also work towards helping each one in the relation unfold their intrinsic divinity and beauty. This ideal or goal of helping others to unfold and express their intrinsic divine potentials, and to help them proceed in their spiritual evolution, is an important goal in any relationship and it is essential for the best relations possible.

For the ideal relation is not *just* to have peace and harmony, but also to be mutually nurturing for the spiritual unfoldment of each one in the relationship, the unfoldment of each person's divine and creative potential, bringing the latent into actuality.

An essential ultimate Goal is the progressive spiritual evolution of each person, group, network, and finally the whole world, and in this evolution is the unfoldment of spiritual potentials. Thus, if we seek good relations, we should consider the needs and spiritual potentials of each person or group in that relation.

Another important work is help heal and resolve any conflicts, discord, disturbances, or problems. This work is also called restoration. It is a work of restoring the spiritual unfoldment of a relation and all its members, by resolving conflict or discord.

Some degrees of conflict or occasional discord might be present, but what is essential for good relations is a shared attitude and intention of working towards resolving conflicts and problems in the relationship, along with resolving internal problems.

For as long as all in the relation are working towards improving the relation and resolving disagreements, this is a good relation, headed towards healing, harmony, and mutual achievements. But along with this is the importance of nurturing the spiritual creative unfoldment of each person or group in the relation.

Good Relations is a practical Ideal

The ideal of Good Relations is already intrinsic in our nature, and we intuitively know it is an essential quality of a good life. Even for those unconscious of this, deep in all of us is a natural desire for good relations, harmony, love, and understanding.

Yet in addition, to have good relations makes practical sense as an Ultimate Goal or Ultimate Value in our lives, because every one of us is in some kind of relation with many others and with many groups (social, cultural, vocational, national, etc).

Every person and group is in a multi-relational existence, and we are all affected by or influenced by these multi-relations, even if this is not consciously recognized. So to establish and maintain the best relations possible, with every one of our multi-relations, is a goal or an ideal that is simply rational and practical. That is, it is just plain practical to develop good relations with all beings and to collaborate on achieving our common goals and values, and to achieve mutually enjoyable and shared positive outcomes.

Thus, the ideal of Good Relations does not have to be understood from a spiritual perspective, because it also rationally practical to be in good relations, for good relations will enhance harmony, cooperation and collaboration towards achieving common goals.

Qualities for developing good relations

1. respect and consideration
2. friendliness and goodwill
3. truthfulness and trustworthiness
4. listening and understanding
5. peacefulness and harmony
6. tolerance and forgiveness
7. cooperation and collaboration
8. mutually shared goals and achievements
9. caring and helpfulness
10. sharing and givingness
11. empathy and love
12. self-responsibility for making good relations

By meditating on any of these we understand them better, and by practicing them we develop and manifest them.

Building good relations

Good relations unfold when the most important Values, Goals, Ideals, and Needs of each member are respected and nurtured, and these Values-Goals can be recognized as commonly shared, as for example, harmony, peace, creativity, and mutual success.

Good relations are positive, nurturing, mutually creative and mutually beneficial. Relations are mutually creative when the the creativity of each person or group is respected and nurtured, and good relations are mutually beneficial when the goals and needs of each participant are also respected and nurtured.

So, to understand and achieve Good Relations, we need to know how to relate well with others and how to mutually cooperate to achieve our shared goals and ideals. This involves a practical, 'how-to' understanding, and yet we can be guided by Principles and Qualities that are essential for achieving good relations.

What makes good relations?

- when ultimate goals and values are mutually shared
- when each works for the best goals and qualities
- when each is producing peace, friendship, love, and trust
- when each is nurturing cooperation and shared enjoyments

Here are some practical ways to build good relations, with those closest to us, in our groups, and in larger inter-group relations.

- discovering our commonly shared values, needs, and goals
- allowing for our differences and disagreements
- listening, learning, and sharing
- cooperating towards our common values, needs, and goals

Two ways to discern good relations

There are two fundamental ways to know good relations from not-good relations, and each of these 'ways of knowing' involve different means for making this discernment.

One way is by a practical-rational discernment and another way is by an emotional-feeling discernment.

Practical-rational discernment, also called our *practical-sense*, is when a relationship or an activity is regarded as good, on the basis of how well it is working in a practical way, or in a way that achieves greater Life Values or Goals. And we discern what is 'practical', or what is working well, by way of our rational mind, applying reasoning and deduction. So in this way, we discern whether a relationship is good or not, better or worse, by how well it is working from a practical perspective, or by its positive or negative effects, and this is all figured out very rationally.

For example, if a relationship is cooperative in a practical way, and beneficial for all who are in it, then this can be regarded as a good relationship; whereas, if it is not cooperatively beneficial, then it is not-so-good, or not working well in practical way.

Qualities that are beneficially practical in a relationship include: cooperation, collaboration, helpfulness, and respect. In addition, practical qualities need to be mutually-beneficial for achieving the greater Goals and Needs of each member in the relation.

For example, nations can build practical and mutually beneficial relations by working cooperatively towards common goals.

Another possible benefit that can be found in a good relationship is a mutual nurturance of the creative potential of each member. This can be thought of as the practical value of a good relation, from the perspective of each creative soul, which needs to be in relations that are nurturing to the soul's creative potential. Thus, in a good relation everyone nurtures the creativity of each other. We can also use our *emotional-sense* to discern good relations, whereby we feel the emotional qualities of this relation, and

know these to be good or not. This is also called a feeling-sense of what is good, true, and worthy. This emotional-feeling sense can even measure the *value* of a relation, to some degree. So, from this emotional-sense the emotional quality of a relation can be known and discerned to be good or not as good.

For example, the emotional quality that is deemed essential to a good relation might be a feeling of harmony. In other words, a relationship is good and has ultimate value, if it has harmony, or if we feel a harmonious emotional quality in it. Emotionally, we sense the distinction between harmony and disharmony.

Also, the feeling of harmony in a relation is distinctly enjoyable, while the feeling of disharmony is not, and this enjoyableness likewise gives the relation a positive feeling, a feeling it is good. By analogy, we can feel the difference between harmonious and disharmonious music, and harmonious music is naturally enjoyed while disharmonious music is not usually enjoyed.

So, harmony is an important quality in any relation, and this harmony is felt and enjoyed through our emotional-sense, or by our sensitiveness to the emotional qualities of a relation. Consequently, because harmony is enjoyed, valued and desired, the relation is felt to be a good relation. In addition, harmony has a practical benefit, because it makes the relation work more smoothly and with less disruptive conflicts, so that the practical goals of this relation can be achieved more easily.

We can emotionally-sense other relationship qualities as well, which helps us discern the goodness and value of the relation. For example, we can feel the qualities of respect, friendliness, caring, and love, which are also enjoyed and appreciated.

Five ways of expressing good relations

Good relations will involve certain essential qualities, such as caring, sharing, goodwill, cooperation, peace and harmony, and each of these qualities can be expressed in five ways.

The first way of expressing a quality of good relations is by an *attitude*; like the attitude of caring, or the attitude of 'I care', or the attitude of being helpful, cooperative, giving, or sharing. These are some of the attitudes which are especially beneficial for building and maintaining good relations, dissolving barriers, healing divisiveness, and bringing forth positive outcomes.

The second way of expressing a quality is by one's *intention*; as for example, the intention to be caring, sharing, or helpful. Our intentions can also include our goals and how we want to be in this relation. And if our intentions are good and helpful, then this can bring peace, comfort, and trust into the relation.

The third way of expressing a quality is through our *thought*; for example the thought, 'I care about you and your well-being'. What we think about others is emanated out to them, and how we think about our relations has an influential effect on them.

The fourth way of expressing a quality is through *feeling*; as for example, a feeling of caring about someone or a group. The feelings we have about others are emanated out and create an emotional atmosphere in any relationship or activity.

All attitudes, intentions, thoughts, and feelings will permeate the atmosphere of a relationship or circumstance, and people can recognize and feel these subjective emanations.

The fifth way of expressing a quality is by *outward expression*, or how we manifest this quality in the outer world. For example, we can outwardly express the quality of caring by helping others or by verbally expressing to them our caring and love. Or we can outwardly express cooperation and helpfulness to another group.

Good relations are nourished with an attitude, intention,

thought, and feeling of caring, respect, and consideration. These four subjective factors are in all relations, whether one is aware of this or not. And in any relation, they can be either nurturing or otherwise impeding to a good relationship.

For example, if our attitude and intention in a relationship is to be helpful, then others will intuitively recognize this and the whole relationship will benefit and be strengthened. Our feelings are also efficaciously significant in a relationship, even if the relationship is impersonal, practical or business. As well, our feelings contribute to the 'emotional atmosphere' of any relationship, any group meeting, discussion or activity. Thoughts also emanate in our relations, and thoughts of love, goodwill, and understanding are nurturing for all our relations.

Relations are improved when there is:

- an attitude of wanting good relations
- an attitude of always improving good relations
- an attitude of healing any discord or divisiveness
- an intention to be always considerate and helpful
- thinking of how to have and improve good relations
- a feeling of goodwill, caring, and shared togetherness

Our soul creates good relations

Our soul is our natural and sincere self,
our beautiful and loving self,
our exploratory and creative self.
Our soul is our wisdom self,
our guiding self, our purposeful self.

We know our interconnections with all things,
we know our love for all people, and for all of life,
we know our goodwill and our good intentions,
and we seek to be the best we can be every moment.
We do what we can do, but always know we can do better.

Our wish is for good relations in all fields of activity,
everywhere, in every situation, and for everyone,
and we seek harmonious and co-operating relations,
loving and considerate relations, and for *all* our relations.
This is the spirit of love and unity, of goodwill and caring.

We are each one with all our relations, with all people
and all of nature. We are all inter connected and related.
The spirit of goodwill is to be inclusive of all,
to have unconditional love and care for everyone,
including all our natural relations, animal, plant and mineral.

In addition, the soul makes an effort to manifest, to express,
and to creatively live life, with exploration and discovery,
and with courage to uphold and live by one's highest values.
The soul brings into life the qualities of love, insight, and effort.
As well, the soul appreciates beauty, excellence, and goodness.

The world matrix of relations

Each person or group will have some common values and some differences, in relation with other persons and groups. So, each of us and each group will resonate better with some people and groups more than others. Even with close personal and group relations, there will be some areas of commonality and other areas of difference or disagreement. Values and goals that are more general will be shared by more people and groups, though there will often be different viewpoints and ideas about how to achieve those common values, or how to solve shared problems.

This matrix can be understood by an analogy of one great Tree. The roots of this Tree are the intrinsic human values and needs within our human nature, the human soul. We all have these common roots, the roots of our human nature, the roots of our common values and needs. And all these common roots form the unity of humanity, which is the one trunk of the great Tree. Here we are all one, because of our common values and needs. But at this level our values and needs are generally understood, rather than specific to each circumstance; and as our common general values, ideals, and goals become more specific for each kind of circumstance and need, there will be some differences in these specific values, ideals, and goals. In other words, as we each approach the specific circumstances and needs of our life, there will be more differences and diversity in our specific goals and ideas of how to achieve our deepest root values and needs.

This is the branching out of the Tree, as the general common Values of all humanity branch out into differences and diversity, due to differences in people, groups, and life circumstances. However, these differences are not irreconcilable, because at the roots of all these diverse differences we share common Values, and thus it is always possible to reach common ground, reconcile our differences, and solve conflicts of differing views and goals.

Horizontal and vertical dimensions

The matrix of relations has both a horizontal and a vertical dimension. These are the two basic types of relationships.

The horizontal includes all of our relations with others in life.

The vertical is our connection with Spiritual Reality, Hierarchy, or with God. These dimensions are symbolized by the Holy Cross.

We are involved in a complex of horizontal relations: personal, group, community, national, global, cultural, and ecological.

These can be thought of as concentric circles, yet overlapping, and each with their own physical, emotional, and mental aspects. But we have a choice, to be increasingly conscious of them, or not.

We also have a choice, to be proactive in our relations, or passive.

Being proactive is to be positive, helpful, loving and intelligent.

It is being pro-active in goodwill to everyone, to all relations, and to participate in the spiritual evolution of the whole world.

In this world of continuous change, with ever new discoveries and ever new challenges, we must continuously learn to adapt and evolve, in how we relate with others and our environment.

Our vertical relationship is our connection with the Spirit of life, the Spirit within, and our own spiritual journey of self discovery.

This can advance and strengthen through prayer, invocation, meditation, reflective thought, and psychological self-synthesis.

The vertical dimension provides the inner motivation and drive towards a continuous evolution and betterment of all relations, as the vertical-spiritual infuses into and motivationally inspires our horizontal-worldly relations, including our social relations and our relations with nature. From the vertical we are inspired, and in the horizontal we manifest, create, maintain, and sustain.

So in our horizontal relations we can be creative, but we also need to respect and co-operate with the creativity of all others, including the natural world of diverse ecosystems. Thus we are co-creators within the horizontal dimension of life relations.

Groups within Groups

Relations can be conceptually understood as 'levels of groups'. Think of each relation as a group, which can range from a group of two persons to a group of millions, or even to a whole group called humanity, or a whole group known as the Earth ecosystem.

So, within the whole relation of Life are various 'groups', ranging from small to large; with the larger relations usually being more complex. Now, if we imagine the largest groups [of relations] in all of humanity, there will be fewer of these larger groups than there are of the smaller groups. This is also true for ecological relations, since there will be millions of smaller ecosystems within larger ecosystems, and thus there are less of the larger ecosystems compared to the smaller ecosystems. This principle is known as the hierarchical structure of ecosystems. Yet this same principle is true for the complexity of human relations, in which smaller relational groups are part of larger relational groups, and larger relational groups encompass smaller relational groups.

Each larger group includes a larger sum of individuals, starting from groups of two all the way to the one group of the Whole. Reversely, ascending up the hierarchy are fewer larger groups. The largest of groups are the nations, ethnic groups, cultural groups, religious groups, economic and political groups, which make up the current human world. Parallel to the human world is the ecological world, the animal, plant and mineral kingdoms, all of which are related, in some way and to some degree. Thus, a larger group will include any number of smaller groups, and each of these larger groups will be part of an even larger group.

Another important aspect of a group describes the relationships within that group, such as how the participants relate together or work together. For example, the relations within a group could be cohesive, integrated, harmonious, and cooperative, rather than divisive, chaotic, turbulent, conflicting, or harmful.

So, in any group, no matter the size, can its relations be better?

Can better relations be established? Of course they can, and we all know this. Relations can always be better, if the participants make efforts to make them better.

In the human kingdom we can all achieve better relations with one another and between the different kinds of groups. These better relations would include more harmony, thoughtfulness, and goodwill. Then, in the ecological systems, better relations would be greater adaptation, harmony, and mutual benefits.

All these kingdoms and groups must evolve their relations with each other; building cooperation and unity, though without any uniformity or fixed design demanded by any single group. This cooperative unity will also include a tolerance for the freedoms of others, including accepting the diverse differences of others.

Ecologically, every species and ecosystem shares a relationship with others, and thus must learn to adapt and find harmony. Ecological diversity can thrive only in a co-operative relation with others, with each benefiting the others in some way. This is also true for the human kingdom, as we all have to figure out how to better relate with one another and with the ecosystems.

Ultimately, each individual and group is a part of the One Life, all sharing in the same Life, the One Spirit, or Universal Nature. In life, all is interrelated and interdependent, in some degree. Whatever is happening for one member is effecting all the rest. Thus, good relations must take into account all circumstances and events throughout the whole, because everything affects all of life, including the effects of every thought, feeling, and action.

These same principles apply to our vertical relationship with the 'spiritual hierarchy', which is composed of groups within Groups. These are the esoteric or hidden relations, which metaphysically influence each of us and all of Life. So we can also improve these spiritual relations, by developing cooperation and integration.

Creative Meditation on Good Relations

1. reflect upon the ideal of Good Relations
 - think about the meaning and value of Good Relations
 - think about how to express or manifest Good Relations
 - think of or visualize some examples of Good Relations
 - experience a feeling of having Good Relations
 - meditate on a quality that is helpful for Good Relations
2. visualizations
 - visualize being in Good Relations
 - visualize Light and Love flowing in all relationships
 - imagine nations and groups having Good Relations
3. visualize a symbol of Good Relations
 - people holding hands
 - children joyfully playing together
4. reflect upon a prayer for Good Relations
 - may all my relations be harmonious and collaborative
 - may all relations in the world peaceful and cooperative
5. reflect upon an affirmation of Good Relations
 - I and all my relations are interconnected in One Life
 - Good Relations is possible in every kind of relationship
 - I will strive for harmony and cooperation in all relations
 - I am now in an attitude of Good Relations with all beings
6. be receptive to the Intuition
 - for a teaching, clue, or symbol about Good Relations
 - for a feeling or an experience of Good Relations
7. radiate the ideal of Good Relations
 - send forth the inspiring ideal of Good Relations
 - send forth a symbol of Good Relations
 - send forth one's understanding of Good Relations

Questions for meditative inquiry

1. What does *good relations* mean?
2. How would I explain *good relations*?
3. How is *good relations* expressed or manifested?
4. What are some expressive qualities of *good relations*?
5. What is the importance of *good relations*?
6. What are some positive effects of *good relations*?
7. What are some first steps to achieve *good relations*?
8. What is my own responsibility in *good relations*?
9. How can I be, and how can we be, in *good relations*?



The Principle of
Creative Unity



Diversity in Unity

We are each expressions of the Divine, in the Unity of Being.
We are each beautiful manifestations of One Divine Being.

There are many valid ways to express and manifest the Unity, as well as a multitude of understandings as to how do so, yet the Unity enfolds all of this diversity by their common principles and purposes, goals and values.

In the Unity is one common purpose, which is a diversity of creatively unique expressions within one harmonious Unity. Thus, one Unity, yet many creative unique expressions within it, and all of these in a creative process of harmonious adaptation and sometimes a synthesis. A synthesis is the building of unity from diversity and from the process of resolving differences. This requires a will-to-unity, will-to-synthesis, will-to-oneness. This will-towards harmonious unity, synthesis and oneness is what builds unity, though a unity of diversity, not sameness.

Thus, Unity expresses and manifests through creative diversity, rather than conformity, as there is no perfect ideal expression, form or manifestation of Unity. For if so, what would that be?

Every expression or form is just one style of creative expression. Is there a perfect design of a chair? Or just one form of Divine? Of course not. There are many ways to express the beauty of Life, but no one uniform way, and no perfect right form of the Divine. The Divine, in its wholeness, can only be expressed as diversity.

One way to symbolize Unity is as a symphony, composed of a diversity of musical instruments and notes, yet blended into a harmonious unity. Another symbol of Unity is a diamond, with multiple facets and colors, reflecting the multi-diversity and beauty of the whole diamond, each ray a uniquely beautiful manifestation of the Unity Itself, the Greatness Itself.

If group contributions are governed by 'the good of the whole', then the whole group grows strong, and yet there needs to be

respectful allowance for the creativity of its members to beautify and bring a larger wholeness into the group consciousness.

It is ideal that a group's unity of purpose is realized and strong, and that it can absorb the diversity of its collective members, rather than impose a uniform way to be and express oneself. Even just one defined purpose, goal, or principle will have many ways to express and manifest it. Yet all kinds of expressions are brought together in the unity of their values, goals, and needs.

Our Goal is towards unity, synthesis, and conscious oneness; requiring a will-to-unity, will-to-synthesis, and will-to-oneness. We each have an intrinsic will-to-unity, to unify and have unity, in our self, in our group, and in the world.

The will-to-unity is related with the magnetic power of Unity, the power that brings people together. It is the magnetic power that unifies, and it is unconditional, inclusive, and equal to all. It is a power that draws people together, but without compulsion.

The will-to-synthesis is the will to unify many diverse elements, to create a unified and integrated evolution of the existing forms. The will-to-oneness is a will to consciously experience oneness, wherein all separation is left behind, and only oneness remains, or all that remains is the one consciousness of Being.

Key questions:

- how to unify diverging views, different beliefs and forms
- how to build agreement and harmony, from diversity
- how can diversity harmonize or cooperate into a unity

Unity is not uniformity

Unity is achieved upon agreement, harmony, and cooperation among all participants in a group or in a whole inter-relation. The group comes together in unanimity by their shared beliefs and values, but not by an imposed coercion or authoritarianism.

An enforced and coerced unity, often enacted by an imposed set of rigid rules, is a convenient way to achieve unity in a group. But in a true unity there is no enforced nor coerced uniformity, as demanded by an authoritarian leader nor by a ruling majority. Enforced unity is not true unity; for in a true unity the members recognize their common values and goals, and they freely choose to cooperate towards achieving their common goals and ideals. More deeply, they share a conscious oneness of mind and heart.

A true unity allows for freedom and accepts a diversity of views and expressions, as long as this is not harmful to the well-being of others in the group or relationship. Moreover, in a true unity, creative diversity is embraced and acknowledged to be good for the whole, because diversity adds to the richness of qualities in any group or interrelationship. However, each free expression of diversity needs to be considerate of all the other viewpoints and expressions, and also be adaptive within the larger relation. So there is a need for adaptive responsibility from each member.

Yet, the need for cooperation, adaptation, and harmonization does not entail that all members of a unity necessarily have to think, believe, and behave in the same uniform manner. In unity everyone will share the same larger purposes, values and goals, but not necessarily express themselves in the same uniform way. Sometimes, uniformity is a freely chosen expression in a group, as in situations of group dance or ritual, but not in all situations. For in general, creative diversity is needed in a group or relation, because a group can only evolve when it has diversity within it.

Unity is not static

Another misconception about Unity is imagining it is static, such as everything being in a perfect but static-fixed harmony. Unity has harmony, but this harmony is ever-evolving, rather than being just one fixed form. For unity can be fluid, relational, and ever evolving; as long as an overall general intelligence is at work within the overall process. Even if some parts of the Whole may temporarily be in disharmony or not in integration, Unity still is. The world is *in-process* of becoming more harmonious, integrated and just, but is not yet there. *Process* is in the Unity. And the process of integration and harmony is endless, always evolving, and never static. It is always moving forward in the infinity of time, and this is all within the Unity.

A more perfect integration, harmony and synthesis is in process of becoming. It is in a creative process of becoming. This is the spiritual process of perfection, which is a continuous process of perfecting. There is no final end point of absolute perfection, as though the whole creative process is to achieve a final perfect result. Instead, the divine creative process is endless, and so is the process of integration, harmony, and synthesis. Thus, there is no final 'perfect form' of unity; just as there is no absolutely perfect form of music or art. There is no final moment in time, in which all is complete, or in perfect harmony or perfect unity.

The whole creative process itself is the whole Unity. This whole creation, through time, is the Unity-in-process, a process of all life becoming evermore integrated, harmonious, and beautiful. Thus, Unity embraces and includes the whole creative process, which is never ending. But also, Unity is guiding this process of integration, harmonization, and synthesis. It is not determining the creative outcomes, or how Unity will be manifested, but it is guiding the overall process – to be continuously integrating and harmonizing, thus continually creating new forms of beauty.

A process of unifying

In Unity, a maximization of free choice and creative expression is valued. Thus, group-unity must include and accept diversity. Yet each expression of choice and diversity must also respect the needs and aims of the whole group. This is a difficult balance to be achieved, between people's free choice and the larger needs of the greater whole, and it will require a continuous process of dialogue, compromise, adaptation, and synthesis.

The goal is to balance individual creativity with group needs, group values and goals, and finally a balance with the Whole. For although diversity is given maximum respect, there is also a need for each member to maintain a will-to-unity, or a desire to unify, as well as a self orientation and attitude that is towards the good of the greater unity. But although the good of the whole is given maximum respect, personal choice is also respected.

In this 'process to unity', diversity is continually being unified, not by an imposed demand for sameness, but by an inclusive acceptance and integration into the unity. And simultaneously, each element of diversity is continually striving to express this unity in a unique yet unifying way. Thus, each expression of the great Unity is respected and appreciated, as long as it has in it the will-to-unity.

Diversity-in-unity entails mutual respect and a willingness to give and take, with no one person or viewpoint assuming authority over all others. This is the principle of inclusiveness. Everyone is included in the unity, with equal respect, though no one authority is given unconditional allowance to dominate.

The ideal unity is a harmony between our personal freedom and the larger needs of our social and physical environment. To reach this ideal unity involves a process of balancing and harmonizing both of these intrinsically important values.

Disagreements and obstacles

In any group, there will at times be disagreements, different viewpoints, or different ways of expressing the group's values. Some people's vision and ideas of the best way forward might be different than others in the group. But these disagreements are often in regards to specific issues or specific ways to implement the group's core aims, or on the details of a vision. They are not disagreements on the group's core values and goals. So the group unity can still be inclusive of these disagreements on specifics, as long as there is group unanimity on the general overall goals.

Whenever a group becomes caught up in disagreements about the details or specifics, it is helpful to re-center the discussion upon the group's common ground of consensus and unanimity, and thus renew the discussion from this common agreement. This renews the group process from the common ground.

In the stage of definite planning and implementation, the details will be important, but first it is essential for the group to build its unanimity of foundational agreement. Then, the group unity can build from this common ground of shared agreement. Also, in any group discussion or endeavor, the overall attitude should be to look for the good, or the partial good, in any viewpoint or way, rather than focus on what's imperfect or deficient about it. Complementing this is an acceptance of human imperfections.

Also, group unity can sometimes be hindered by one's glamour of self importance, individuality, independence, and freedom, which sometimes gets in the way of cooperative group work. These individualistic tendencies often undermine the potential for one to cooperate unitedly for the good of the greater whole, and they may impede the practical work and service of a group. All of these qualities of the individual self are good and worthy, but they can also become obsessive or extreme, and thus hinder the subjective unity and cooperative united work of that group.

Different sides of the lake

There was once a large beautiful lake, pure for drinking and having an abundance of fish and edible vegetation. Four villages surrounded this divine natural lake, each occupying one of the lake's four directions. Everyone used and enjoyed the same lake, but occasionally two or more of the villages disagreed on the how to treat the lake, each seeing the lake from a different view.

Our world has a history of disagreements and conflicts, but all of this stems from each having a different view of the same world. Sometimes one has a self-centered view and wants to dominate or control the others, or acquire excessively more than the others. Yet, if each side of a disagreement were willing to see the other perspective, or see from where the others are coming from, then they would all understand each other better and find ways to cooperate towards their common needs and larger goals. Thus, in any argument or debate, one needs to think about both sides, especially opposites, to see the other side's perspective.

Now, if one thinks about how to help this whole lake community of four villages, the first advice is to sustain a friendly dialogue, with discussion about their common needs and uses of the lake, along with a cordial discussion of any larger goals for the lake, including any disagreements and different points of view. Next, occasionally travel the whole lake, visiting each of the villages, enjoying their unique view, and discussing feelings and ideas.

But the most obvious advice is to collaboratively take care of the whole lake for the common good of all the surrounding villages. Then, allow freedom for all the sides, rather than try to impose. Try to educate, not force. Try to love, not hate. Be open-minded. Be caring, considerate and respectful of the other point of view. So if we look at the world, the important needs are cooperation, peace, non-violence, human rights, and ecological awareness.

Spheres of unity

- Self unity
- Group unity
- Intergroup unity
- World unity
- Spiritual unity

Group unity is achieved by

- Common Purposes
- Love and Caring
- Sharing and Communication
- Goodwill and Good Relations
- Group Meditation and Silence
- Inter-subjective communication
- Inter-objective cooperative work

Qualities to cultivate for unity

- will-to-love
- will-to-harmony
- will-to-unity
- will-to-share
- realizing common purposes, values, and goals
- united group intentions, thinking, and activities
- acceptance of diversity and different perspectives
- valuing individual creativity and inspiration
- blending and synthesis of diverse contributions
- creating agreements and developing unanimity

Inclusive group consciousness

A new and expanding 'Group-consciousness' is developing in humanity, which is based on inclusive love and holistic wisdom. Group consciousness in humanity is not new; there are and have been many group-consciousness' in humanity. Yet often these are *separatist* forms of group consciousness who are frequently in opposition and closed-minded to each other's views and ideas. But an *inclusive* group consciousness is not separative-minded, but rather inclusive-minded. It doesn't have a separative attitude in relation with other groups; rather, it has an inclusive attitude, based on people's realization of their essential unity with others or even unity with all life on Earth.

An inclusive group consciousness seeks to build 'inclusive unity' in the whole world; not based on just one dominating cultural ideal, but on the inclusive principles of Unity-in-diversity, Unity-in-love, Unity-in-interrelationships, and Unity-in-cooperation. And a goal of inclusive group consciousness is for all humanity to be together in love and cooperation, and united in our common life purposes, our common needs, and our common values.

This inclusive attitude and thinking, in relation to all humanity, will inevitably begin with individuals coming into this inclusive consciousness, yet these individuals with inclusive consciousness are subjectively united with all others of the same consciousness, thus forming and building a collective group consciousness that is based on being inclusive, accepting, and loving towards all others. This world-inclusive group consciousness will gradually expand, as more and more separatist groups join in with the inclusiveness. But in the beginning, the inclusive group-consciousness will need to hold stable and unerring in its inclusive attitude and thinking, thus offering to all people an abode, inclusive in its consciousness.

Building a unity-consciousness and world-unity

One by one and group by group, an inclusive unity consciousness will gradually build and develop, through the power of resonance, as we build an inclusive unity of mind and heart. We will build a love-unity consciousness, which will be inclusive of all humanity, all life, and all diversity; but this will take some time to unfold.

Gradually, more and more people, and more and more groups, will enter into an inner consciousness of unity, thinking in unity and feeling in unity, and living in unity together with everyone on Earth; thus building a 'united humanity' and 'world-unity' manifested on Earth.

The building of an external manifested world-unity, which is inclusive and cooperative, will be a challenging process. Yet this external manifestation of unity will first require an inner realization and consciousness of our essential unity. That is, a unity-consciousness will have to precede a united world unity.

So, it is necessary for each of us to come together as One Group, as one unified Group Consciousness, and build this World Unity together, by building our Unity of mind, heart, and goodwill, dedicated towards the same Greater Purpose of world unity, world love, world cooperation, and world harmony. For in order to actually achieve a manifested world unity, there must first be an emerging World Consciousness, with a love for everyone and a will towards manifesting One United Humanity.

Thus, we need to build a 'world group-consciousness', which will gradually resonate in the minds and hearts of all humanity, awakening more and more people to our shared essential Unity. Then, as this Unity-consciousness resonates and expands in all humanity, more and more people and groups will join in to give their support, agreement, and cooperative help towards building a manifested World Unity – inclusive and helpful to everyone.

Subjective unity

We usually think of unity as a cooperative functioning group, working harmoniously together to achieve common goals.

This is a good definition of unity in the outer external world, or in our manifest relations with others. But unity can also be experienced subjectively, or inwardly, as a connective oneness or a relational unity with others. So unity has these two aspects, the outward or external aspect of 'unity in a group endeavor', and the inward or subjective aspect of 'inner unity with others'.

Subjective unity is an inner knowingness of unity with all others. It is a feeling or experience of being connected in unity, in heart and in mind, with a person, a group, or with all life of the world. Subjective unity is also realized as we include others in our love, and as we accept and appreciate the diversity of others; for then, our experience of unity is inclusive of all the diversity in life.

Subjective unity can be experienced as a feeling of connection and oneness with others, or with a group, yet it also involves a mental realization of unity, in which one has an understanding of being in unity or being in connective relationship with others, and a realization of our common essence, our common reality, needs, values and goals. This inner knowingness of unity is also fostered by realizing the larger spiritual purposes that we share with others, and realizing this larger purpose unites the group inwardly and outwardly. In addition, a realization of subjective unity, with all others and with all of life, can guide our thinking and attitude towards other people and the natural environment.

Thus, subjective unity can be experienced as a feeling-of-oneness within the heart and also as a realization-of-oneness in the mind. It can be a feeling of inner connection with others, and it can be a realization of sharing the same needs, values, purposes, or goals. Then, from our subjective unity, outward unity will surely follow.

The feeling of Unity

Outward group agreement is needed for a group's effectiveness in the world, but a group's shared 'subjective agreement' is also efficacious in the world, through the realm of mind and feelings. Thus, agreement has both an outward and subjective power.

Along with a shared subjective agreement, there is also a great power in our shared 'feeling of unity', or oneness with each other and with all life. This feeling of oneness with others, or a group, is often brought about by having common beliefs, values, ideals, and agreements, and by working cooperatively together in group endeavors. But this feeling of oneness can also be experienced prior to any outward agreements or outer unity. In other words, a feeling of oneness can just be experienced on its own, without any reliance or dependency on outer agreement.

This feeling of oneness, with others or with the world, can also include and embrace a diversity of different views and beliefs, and it does not get upset or ruffled by differences in opinion, nor by different creative expressions, nor by temporary conflicts or disagreements. For in this feeling of oneness, people feel the resonating unity of their shared-beingness, which can expand increasingly to include more and more of everyone in the world.

And in this feeling of unity, there is no insistence for sameness in the group or relationship. Unity is not dependent on uniformity. The creative freedom and uniqueness of each person is valued, and free choice is nurtured. Each is free as an individual, yet all are in unity. This is the foundation of diversity-in-unity, wherein creative diversity is included and also nurtured in the one unity.

The feeling of oneness gets even deeper when it has expanded to include larger collectives of life, such as the kingdoms of Earth and all of humanity, then next expand into the larger Cosmos. The deepest level of feeling in unity is with the Divine, the One, the Real, the Universal, the Unity of Being, the Unity Itself, God.

Spiritual Unity

Even deeper and more profound than our subjective unity with all others is our realized unity with the greater Unity. From the poet Rumi, 'Let us meet in the garden of Unity.' For here, we meet together in Unity, and it is here meet God.

This is the experience of being in the Unity of Being, when this is all there is, with nothing outside it, though having levels of excellence within it. This is our unity with all of the Universe, the Universal Divine Self, the One Being, the Unity Itself.

But to reach this realization of oneness, a person has to let go of their self-serving attitudes and limited self-identity. Then, from this consciousness of Unity, a will to serve naturally arises, along with a will to be creative, truthful, and giving to all of life.

This Unity is and always has been present, but not necessarily realized, and it can only be realized through conscious intent and by a sacrifice of the little self, or the limited idea of oneself, and with a giving of oneself to the One that is, the Unity that is.

This is a subjective experience of Unity, rather than an objective actualization of unity in the world of relations, yet nonetheless this experience of Oneness will positively affect and transform our interactive relations with others and the ecological world.

Also from this consciousness of Unity, comes a will to be in the highest qualities of Being and to express these qualities in life, and also to be conscious of the spiritual qualities found in life, such as the beauty of nature and the love radiating from others.

The greatest unity is in relation to both the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of life. Vertically, we come into unity with God, Being, Unity Itself; while horizontally, we come into unity with others and with nature, and we express this unity. The realization and the expression of unity are both beautiful.

Creative meditation on Unity

First practices –

Preparation – relax, breathe, clear, focus

Spiritual Alignment – using an affirmation, visualization, invocation, dedication, (*using one, a few, or all of these methods*).

Group Alignment – group-connection, group-unification, group-intention, group spiritual-alignment, world connection.

Creative meditation –

Reflection upon the spiritual principle of Unity

- consider the meaning and importance of Unity.
- consider ways that Unity can be manifested or expressed, in personal relations, in groups, or internationally.
- consider one's own responsibility in expressing Unity, along with helping to manifest Unity on Earth.

Receptivity to the Highest Intuition, or to Spiritual Wisdom

This can be maintained throughout meditative reflection, or there can be a special time of being receptive to Intuition, or to a clear understanding about Unity. Also, one can be receptive to 'seeing' an image, symbol, or vision of Unity.

Radiance of Unity

- send forth into the world your understanding of Unity
- send forth a visualized image-symbol of Unity
- think or visualize humanity-in-Unity

Closure – say an Invocation or final Prayer for the world, followed by three OMs or a sacred sound of choice.

Meditations on Unity

Questions on Unity *(for reflective thought)*

1. what does *unity* mean?
2. what *is unity*?
3. how would I explain *unity*?
4. how is *unity* expressed or manifested?
5. what are some expressive qualities of *unity*?
6. what is the importance of *unity*?
7. what are some positive effects of *unity*?
8. what are some first steps to achieve *unity*?
9. what is my own responsibility in *unity*?

Prayers of Unity *(also to reflect upon)*

- may everyone be included in this *unity*
- may everyone realize and express *unity*
- may everyone realize *unity* in their self
- Invocation: May Divine Love bring *unity* in the world

Visualizations of Unity *(also to reflect upon)*

- visualize everyone in *unity* with everyone else
- visualize all groups and nations having *unity*
- visualize yourself expressing *unity* in all relations
- visualize an image-symbol of *unity*

Affirmations of Unity *(also to reflect upon)*

- in my heart I have *unity* for all humanity and all of life
- my will is for the greater *unity* in all circumstances
- I will strive to express *unity* all of the time, everywhere
- I am in *unity* with all of life, all people, and all relations
- I radiate out to the whole world the ideal of *unity*,
from my heart, from my mind, and from my will.

The Principle of **Group Work**



Groups and group relations

A group is a collective of individuals, or a collective-unit, in which there is some degree of interactivity or interrelation among the individuals, whether this is conscious or not.

A group composed of individuals can be part of a larger group, a larger collective, and this larger group can be part of an even larger group. Thus, a vast and complex hierarchy of groups is possible; such as groups within groups within Groups.

A group can also be regraded as a particular environment, or vice versa. For example, an individual is part of a particular environment, whether this be a social or physical environment, and this environment is part of a larger environment, and so on.

Now, from the perspective of each individual and each group is the possibility that they are:

- a) aware or unaware of some of their larger group relations
- b) interacting-interrelating with a larger group relation either in a beneficial way or in a non-beneficial way.

It is also possible for any individual or group to improve their relations with a larger group or larger environment. This is an activity of 'group work' – either a work enacted by an individual in relation to a group, or by a group in relation to a larger group.

For one can always achieve better relations, more harmonious, more intelligent and adaptive, and also more loving and caring. One step forward is appreciating others in our various relations.

Improving any kind of group relation, or environmental relation, can be achieved by:

1. having concern and consideration for that larger group or environment (social or physical)
2. working to improve and benefit that group or environment

A group is a coalition of individuals. It is a group-collective, and the group energy is composed of the energy of its members, which includes its collectivity of mental and emotional energies. The soul of a group is its purpose, direction, values, and ideals. From this, the group has to create goals, which then can evolve.

Groups integrate and unite, as they recognize shared purposes and goals, which become the magnetism holding them together and attracting more members. However, a group's purposes and goals may just be separative and group-centered, or not willing to cooperate or at least make a reasonable compromise. While in contrast, a group's purpose and goals may be for helping the larger world. Thus, each person will need to responsibly decide what are their own purposes and goals, in order to decide what groups to be involved with.

For group unity and success there has to be mutual dedication to the purposes and goals of the group; which are known in the sincerity of one's heart and in the intelligence of one's intuition, rather than by the motivating force of an authority or by rules. For in an era of group togetherness, bonding, and agreement, there is no need for an authoritarian attitude in the leadership.

In this new kind of group, the group itself, all members, discuss the purposes, directions, values, and goals of the group, and then, as a group-in-agreement, decide on the way forward; yet with patience and commitment to sustaining an intelligent and caring dialogue, with a cordial resolution of disagreements. From this process of discussion and consensus building emerge common agreements, synergy, and an experience of group-mind.

Groups will recognize their common purposes and goals with other groups, then collaborate towards achieving them, with respect, cooperation, and consideration for the greater good, while giving space for a diversity of viewpoints and ideas.

Interconnected groups will need to

- communicate well with one another
- discover common ground
- appreciate each other's diversity
- find ways to cooperate and work together

As the purposes of these groups are similar, they will grow together as one cooperative unity, though remain diverse.

In this will be expanding spheres of group interrelationships, with intergroup-unity, common purposes, and cooperation.

Groups with the same purpose of helping humanity and Earth, can generally be called 'world-service groups', though groups within this overall general purpose may have uniquely specific purposes, goals, and group-work, depending on what problems or needs they are addressing, and depending on their abilities.

For example, one group's purpose might be to help meet the need of a particular part of humanity, or a specific problem, while another group might serve or help something different. Some groups will work to solve a particular problem or need, while other groups will seek to help solve a different problem. Yet all of these groups will have the same fundamental purpose and intention, which is to solve problems and serve the Good.

In any world-serving group work, there will be difficult times, such as interactions with separative and reactionary groups. But rather than fight against those opposed to one's objectives, it is more effective to work at building a stronger cooperation, based on the group's common goals and needs. The focus of resolution has to be on what is common, shared, and respected. It is better to cooperate, than to struggle against an opposition. Also, the greater spiritual Light can be invoked, from the Divine, to help solve these problems and resolve any disagreements.

Ways of Group integration

- recognizing a common purpose or common goals
- shared feelings of love, caring, and group oneness
- open-sharing and honest-communication
- building and maintaining good relations
- group meditation and silence
- outward group-service or group-work

Reflections on group work

- recognize one kind of group work you are now in
- consider the contribution you make to this group
- consider the contribution the group makes in your life
- consider your own responsibility in having good relations

Qualities for group work

- cooperation
- collaboration
- listening
- understanding
- caring
- helpfulness
- creative sharing
- enthusiasm for group aims

Ways to achieve group unity

- realizing purpose
- sharing the same intention
- united in their thinking and visions
- appreciating the diversity of creative contributions
- creatively free but within the limits of larger needs

Obstacles to unity

- self righteousness and self importance
- group righteousness and group importance
- fanaticism in particular beliefs or methods
- over-emphasis on specific details or methods
- enforced uniformity by an authority or by rigid rules
- manipulation, coercion, or suppression

Resolving conflicts or disagreements

- honestly listen and consider the other point of view
- recognize what is most essential and what is not
- recognize shared intentions, values and goals
- strengthen agreements and common ground
- at times, set aside disagreements on specifics
- cultivate understanding and trust
- respect the creativity and diversity of others
- maintain a sense of oneness and common endeavor

Group discussion and dialogue

In group discussion, on any topic or issue, ground rules provide a safe and fair environment for everyone to express their ideas.

- everyone is respected to express their ideas, opinions, beliefs
- each person is allowed to speak without being interrupted
- time limits – no one is allowed to dominate the discussion
- it's ok to ask for a person's reasons for their opinion or belief
- it's ok to challenge ideas, opinions, beliefs, but not the person
- use respectful language, without put-downs or labeling

Facilitation of a group discussion

- be encouraging of individual ideas, thoughts, and feelings
- encourage open-mindedness but also rational thinking
- be impartial, fair-minded, and respectful of diverse viewpoints
- protect the climate of respect, fairness, and non-prejudice
- try to be a role-model of intelligent & unbiased objectiveness
- stimulate the discussion with probing and inquiring questions
- keep the discussion focused on one question or issue at a time
- periodically summarize or restate some of the ideas discussed
- periodically make connections between related ideas
- periodically mention questions or issues still unresolved
- periodically bring forth different or opposing viewpoints
- a facilitator can present information relevant to the discussion
- a facilitator can challenge any beliefs, assumptions or opinions

Balancing the outer with the inner

Besides the outer-objective work of a group, there is also a need in the group for inner-subjective work, as both are important. This inner-subjective work is a responsibility for each member of a group; as for example, each person's need for self-reflection and intelligent thinking about the group's purposes and work. But the group itself can also engage together in subjective work, in which the group adds in to its group-process various practices of subjective attunement, alignment, and reflective meditation, which brings an important balance to the outer group-work.

Without the outward group work, nothing would ever get done; yet without some group self-reflection on the group's purposes and direction, a group can become stuck in its habit patterns and accepted routines, and without some sharing of individual self-reflections and insights, a group misses out on new ideas and other creative input that come only come from its members.

Also, when a group includes inward reflection and self-insights, a sincere dialogue can arise over values, goals, and procedures, as well as discussing and resolving other issues as they arise. Thus, one's outward group work is balanced by one's inner work of self-reflection, self-observation, self-adjusting, self-maturing, and self-balancing, which will benefit the group's outer work.

Then, as the inner person is developed, their outer activity and creativity in the group will be enhanced, thus helping the group. The more self-reflective and mature the group's participants are, the more the group will benefit. Because a group only matures because of its member's maturing, and a group only self-reflects to the degree of the participant's self-reflection and inner-work. For remember, a group wisdom and direction is dependent on the wisdom and realizations of its individual participants.

Group meditation

Meditation is a beneficial practice for any group with the aim of outward goodwill and world-service. So, occasional times for group meditation can be included into a group's agenda and process, and this period of meditation can also be a time for people to renew their spiritual attunement as a group and come together in shared love, light, and dedicated goodwill.

In meditation, the members can silently reflect on the group's purposes, values, ideals, and the way forward. Also helpful is to include a short time for people to be intuitively receptive for new insights, visions, and further steps for the group work. Also, a group can reflect on its positive and valuable role in teaching and spreading the highest values and visions for all of humanity and Earth.

Another aspect of meditation is to vitalize the great ideals and world values that we already know – by giving thought to each and improving our understanding of them. This can be done on one's own or in group meditation, for the purpose of manifesting spiritual ideals and values, as much as we can understand them.

The power of united thought is usually unrecognized, yet group united thought has a synergistic power in the world, to influence and transform ideas and beliefs held in the mind of humanity. Therefore, a group can produce positive changes in the world by their united thoughts of goodwill, good relations, and other spiritual ideals upon which a group is united in agreement.

Guidance for group meditation

- We come together in group attunement, presence, and unity
- We unite together in group mind, heart, and goodwill
- We align ourselves with the highest spiritual inspiration
- Let us now meditate on a group purpose or group intention, and let us be receptive to realizing ways to manifest this.

Balancing creative freedom and group work

Two very important ideals are: individual creative freedom and united group work. Yet sometimes, these ideals are in conflict with one another. Sometimes even, creative freedom becomes disruptive or disharmonious to the unitedness of a group work; or conversely, sometimes the ideal of group-unity dominates or suppresses individual creative freedom. However, this possible conflict can be avoided or resolved by balancing the two ideals, wherein both are respected and appreciated for their importance, and both are nurtured by the individuals and by the group.

Sometimes, group-work requires some degree of restraint from individuals in expressing their unique creativity and visions. Yet, every group evolves only by the creative contributions of the individuals in it. Thus, individual creative expression and ideas are vital to the creative evolution of a group and its work.

Extreme assertiveness, criticism of others, and also indifference need to be self-observed and restrained for the good of the group, and individual personalities should not dominate the group-work. Yet a group should not suppress personal thinking and creativity, because this creative freedom brings new ideas to a group-work.

So, every group-work needs creative thinkers and artists to solve the challenges of helping the world, humanity and all of nature to thrive in a peaceful, cooperative and ecologically-smart world. In complement, a united and harmonious group-work provides a needed context and vehicle for the creative ideas of individuals.

Thus, both of these great ideals, individual creative freedom and united group work, are significantly important and should be respected, nurtured, and balanced with each other.

Initiative-will and harmonious-will

Some people in a group will have a more developed will and self-assertiveness. This can manifest in two polarized ways:

a) those who have a strong will and assertiveness primarily

for their self-centered ends or purposes.

- b) those who have a will-to-serve, or have a will to be of service to a higher purpose or to group endeavors.

Of those with a will-to-serve and a will towards higher purposes, there are two dispositional types (though these can complement):

- a) those with a strong individual-initiative will
- b) those with a strong group-harmonious will

Both of these types of group members are group-serving; but one is more individually creative and is self-initiative in offering new perspectives to the group, while the other type primarily seeks to support group cohesion and harmony and to serve the current group objectives, plans, and ways to do things. The one type tends to be more creatively adventurous in what they give, while the other tends to go along and get along with group work. Yet both of these types can complement and balance each other.

The more individually creative people will often be challenged by the need to integrate, harmonize, and fuse with the group, and for the more individualistic person, group harmony may at times be difficult to achieve. Whereas, for the group-harmony minded person, their primary motivation and aim is to work for group harmony. Yet the challenge for this person is to not fall into a habit of simply accepting whatever the group believes and says, or whatever direction it is going, without thinking about it or ever questioning anything with their own rational mind and intuition of the heart, and to not simply become absorbed into the group-flow, without ever offering their own self-thinking and intelligent creative ideas to the group.

The intention of a harmonious-will in group interactions is to be supportive, adaptive, and serving the group in a harmonious way. The harmonious-will type of person seeks peace and harmony in the group and tends to 'flow with the group', without making any potential waves or disturbances in that flow. Yet often this person is reluctant to share their own new creative input, in case it might disturb the group flow. They also tend to avoid any questioning of the group's ideas, plans, direction, or procedures of group work. This is because the harmonious-will seeks to avoid disharmonious disturbances, such as conflict, debate, argument, or questioning the current group direction, process, or work. Another possible tendency for this type is to have a passive-will, or no-will at all, which is an ideal held by some spiritual paths, in which the self will is suppressed, along with the initiative-will and its creativity.

In contrast, the initiative-will feels free to creatively contribute new ideas and vision to the group, rather than just follow along with the established ways for serving the group-work. However, this type of will might have a tendency to be over-exuberant in its expressiveness and can be disruptive at times to the group flow.

But the initiative-will *can* be expressed for the good of the group and for a higher level of group-harmony. For the creative will can be inspired and motivated by one's love for the group and its work, and by one's will-to-serve the group's larger purposes and goals. Thus, one's self-initiative need not come from self-centeredness, selfishness, or individualistic pride, because one's assertive will can be motivated by love and the fulfillment of a larger purpose.

So, these two polar types, the harmonious-will and initiative-will, can balance and integrate with one another, and move towards a synthesis by learning from each other with open-minded creative interaction. The harmonious-will can balance and integrate by developing more of their initiative-will and by feeling free to be more creative in their service, while the initiative-will can balance and integrate by realizing their love for group harmony and unity.

Creative Meditation on Group Work

First practices

Preparation – relax, breathe, clear, focus

Spiritual Alignment (*using one, a few, or all of these methods*) – dedication, invocation, affirmation, visualization

Group Alignment – group-connection, group-unification, group-intention, group spiritual-alignment, world connection

Reflection (*choose one or a few of these*)

- recognize one kind of group work you are now in
- consider what group work means to you
- consider the purpose and usefulness of this group work
- consider the importance of this group work
- consider the positive-results intended by this group work
- consider how you can contribute to this group work
- consider your own responsibility in this group work
- consider the qualities needed for group work

Receptivity (*to higher spiritual intuition*)

- to group mind, group heart, and group will-to-good
- to higher purposes, visions, and ideas for group work

Radiance (*into the world*)

- send forth one of the group's values, ideas, or solutions
- visualize and send out an image-symbol of the group work
- visualize or mentally affirm the manifestation of group plans

Closure – say an Invocation or final Prayer for the world,
followed by three OM's or a sacred sound of choice.