

**THE POWER OF**  
**TARGETED**  
**CHOICES**

**11 Simple Steps to  
Better Living**

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*“Everyone is a product of choices and circumstances. No one has power over circumstances, but we all have power over our own choices.”*

Eric Emmanuel Schmitt; *The Alternative Hypothesis*.



*Figure 1: "The Dream and the Film"; acrylic on canvas – Aurora Mazzoldi.*

# INTRODUCTION

When I met Aurora, in 1991, I had already made many changes in my life.

Before then, I had always expected to find the ideal place to live, a satisfactory job and a special woman to spend my life with. Over time, though, these goals had proven to be increasingly unattainable – and I felt increasingly disappointed.

I had lived in Italy, Germany, Canada and Brazil, and my life had apparently changed every time. Apparently. Developing new habits in unknown environments fueled the illusion that this was the case. In truth, I remained myself in all of those countries – with the same emotions, thoughts and reactions I had always had.

I did a variety of jobs, and these new circumstances always distracted me from my internal problems; they created the illusion that I was changing my life... but still I faced the usual, constant dissatisfaction. Even my attempts to share my life with a partner ended miserably!

After a range of other unsatisfactory experiences, I started to realize that I was doing everything wrong; repeatedly changing things externally would never solve my problems. If there was something consistently wrong, I started to realize that it had to be inside me.

It was around that time that I met Aurora. She, too, was emerging from a series of disappointing experiences, similar to mine. She, too, was starting to look for the truth within herself.

But sadly, after a brief period of yet more illusion, our relationship started down the same road as both of our previous ones. Things were becoming troublesome again, and we *each blamed the other*. Added to difficulties at work, and to our each adapting to the new environment, the situation became increasingly intolerable.

We both understood now that external changes (of partner; of work; of environment) would only bring us to another reality – but not to another way of dealing with it. The way we had always done so now seemed increasingly inadequate to us both.

So, we chose a different way.

***The change must come from within.***

First, it was essential for each of us to stop blaming the other. Instead,

we had to draw attention to how we had each contributed to creating misunderstandings, sowing discord, and reacting in ways which were inappropriate.

It was a difficult task, for both of us; we had both slipped into tough habits, which were difficult to pinpoint. To give up our own prejudices and pride, and each admit that we are not always the one in the right, seemed, at the beginning, an impossible sacrifice to both of us. It seemed unnatural for either of us to accept and value a different opinion: that of each other. Renouncing even a minor claim to being right always seemed a huge and sometimes humiliating task.

But the result always paid off.

It was just a matter of getting used to it. Changing habits is hard, but not impossible. If we succeed, the transformation of the habit will always work for, rather than against us. And, then there is a new alternative to the way things were.

A progressive change in our mutually unhappy habits has meant that, after twenty-nine years of compromise and respect, we are still together. We never stopped searching for a new way.

And here are the positive results on our lives:

- Aurora has created another form of “*Introspective Art*”. She has exhibited in various countries to promote it, as well as writing the book: *My Mothers – Introspective Art*;
- I have created the following websites, which I now manage:  
<https://www.osservatoriointeriore.com/>;  
<https://www.introspectivity.com/>;
- We founded the Osservatorio Interiore Association, with two friends;
- To share the contents of our research with interested people, we arrange frequent meetings and conferences;
- We wrote this book together!

Our secret?

We understand that there are different parts within us, each fighting against the other.

This book shows how those conflicts appear in everyday life. It considers the struggles which take place within us, and between us and others. And it shows how we can bring peace to these tumultuous battlefields.

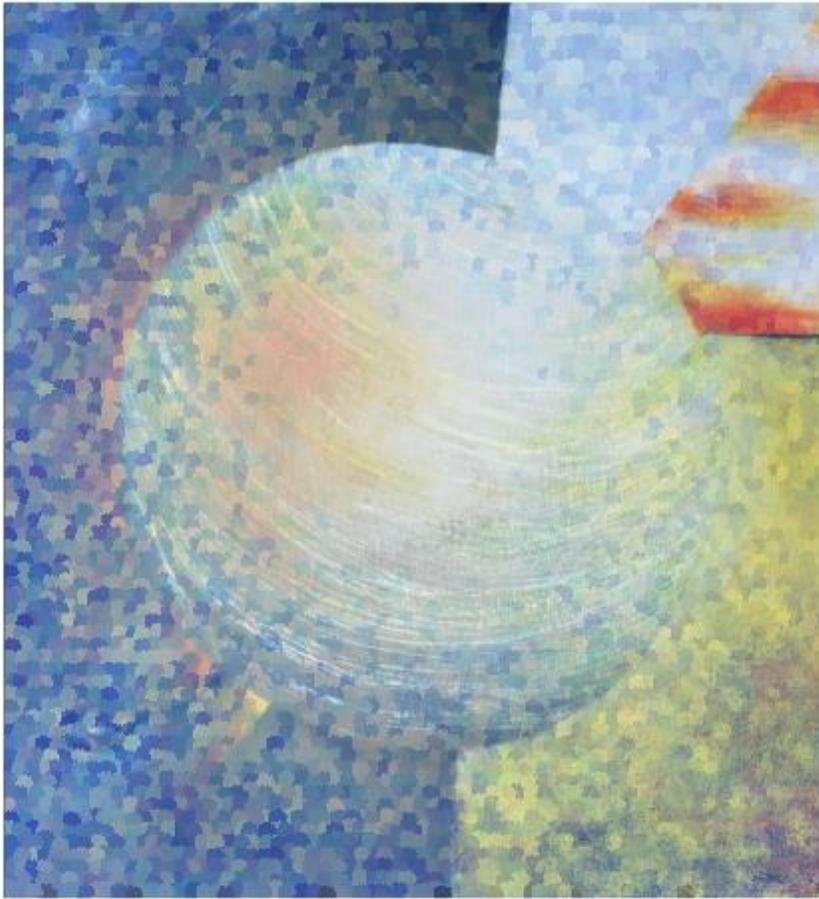


Figure 2: “Room of Mirrors (detail)”; acrylic on canvas – Aurora Mazzoldi.

**To prevent each of our parts from choosing their way on their own, we must learn to center ourselves.**

If we contact it, our center can be made to coordinate, harmonize and manage the various parts of us. It is just a matter of recognizing them, and

contacting the center in one of the many ways we have available. Soon, we will learn to instinctively choose between them. In doing so, many of the choices which previously made us unhappy will change in nature, to become wellness choices. This book will show you how.

*Instinctively* choosing the way forward can seem like a strange concept; it seemed strange to me just a few years ago. I had other ideas then; I wanted to rationalize my life, and in doing so I often overlooked other components of my being.

This was until I found myself one day, whilst in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, realizing that I was finding it difficult to program rigidly. Even at work, where I dealt with business organization and data processing, I started to find that my rigidity was colliding with a reality made up of continually unexpected events. Little by little, I was moving toward something I would start to call “*flexible programming*”. As my reality transformed, I realized it was important not to be unprepared.

The most important lesson came to me as that year came to an end. I spent New Year’s Eve writing by hand – with some poor volunteers – a

number of bills which should have been issued by the computer. The problem? There had been a long, unpredicted delay in the delivery of special paper for the printer. The error which caused it? My having ordered the printer paper from only one supplier.

“Never again am I going to waste New Year’s Eve like this,” I said to myself. Ever since that moment, I have considered the future to be unpredictable. So, I went back to listening to instinct, alongside rationality, having realized that together they were a winning couple.

Our joint inner work has improved our life to such a great extent, we believe it is important that we share our experiences with others.

With whom? Those who are interested in solving life’s problems and searching for its solutions, through self-help books and the experiences of others. But, more importantly, by looking inside themselves.

And, it is for those researchers that we have prepared our 11-step path, covering this most important of topics.

This book examines the life choices we make, then appraises how they can lead to dissatisfaction. How does it do this? By considering a problem, then revealing how somebody else has solved it! Additionally, it then shows advantages/disadvantages of their solution.

Don’t expect a book which tells you to “*do this*” or “*don’t do that*”; you have several possibilities when growing: one may choose the way up, and is ready to struggle and suffer hardship to get there; another will choose the way down, because he lacks the energy or will to struggle, and would rather have a restful life; a third person may love to take a risk, and will choose to climb a rock face to reach the same destination.

Is there a wrong choice? Yes, there is: when somebody whose natural instinct is to climb chooses the way down.

This choice is an example of the possibilities you might face, and which we will address in this book.

To properly decide our choice, it is important to increase our understanding of the situation, so we don’t end up making purely superficial – or worse, wrong – decisions. We need simple explanations of how our emotional and mental processes work, and how our energies flow.

This may be a complex task, but our book draws support from the analogies in paintings and views on existential positions; these tools work like a chalkboard in a math class, to help facilitate our understanding of the metaphor.

Summing up, this book presents 11 steps to promote well living, and to help us set the right goals.

Part 1:

## LIFE CHOICES

*“To heal our life, we must first heal our life choices.”*

How do we start?

Having entrusted our rationality to make small daily choices throughout our lives, it is very easy for us to end up – out of habit or convenience – entrusting it with the most important choices of our life. But is it a mistake to do this? Not necessarily; the mistake is to listen *only* to rationality, and to overlook the valuable contributions of *instinct* and *intuition*. Suggestions of these latter two could in fact free us from narrow patterns of thought and present us with unexplored possibilities.

Let’s take a look at some basic choices, which can potentially restrict life, limiting its potential and freedom of action...

## 1. BASIC CHOICES TO “HEAL”

*“This battle is completely lost, but it is only two o’clock; we have time enough to win another one.”*

Attributed to either France’s General Desaix or Napoleon;  
Battle of Marengo, 14<sup>th</sup> June 1800.

When choosing how to live, we are rarely conscious of what we are doing and the decisions we are making; mostly, we ignore our instincts and intuitions.

Often, our decisions are based on the following factors:

- A desire to please – or to *displease* – others;
- Letting our emotions make decisions for us;
- Fighting against ourselves;
- Avoiding contact with others.
- Etc. ...

All of these are basic decision-making processes, and they are the most common factors when we are children. Ultimately, basing decisions on such factors doesn’t satisfy us, and only by recognizing this fact can we begin to “heal” them – otherwise they will continue to influence every one of our daily choices. They result from superficial emotions and thoughts, which do not consider what we want with any depth.

## IGNORING INSTINCT

When we enter this world, at birth, into the “*beautiful family of plants and animals*” (Ugo Foscolo; *Of the Sepulchers*)<sup>1</sup>, Mother Nature provides us with an instrument for survival: *instinct*.

Like other living beings, we rely on instinct to move in unfamiliar environments, until they no longer feel alien to us. Something vague and innate in us seems to know already the laws which rule the physical world; some inner wisdom – an indefinite feeling – keeps us in touch with the environment surrounding us, and it guides us. Whilst instinct helps us to integrate harmoniously into our new physical world, it also facilitates our inclusion into the more impalpable world of emotions, and

all its complexity.

But, is instinct all we need to make the best decisions?

At the dawn of humanity, it was enough for our survival; it could satisfy the basic needs of man. However, living by instinct alone meant living in the *now*, always *reactive* to unforeseen environmental stresses. Life could have continued in this way; man could have not developed much further, yet still managed to survive. But man did not; he developed something more than animals: he developed possibilities, and the ability to choose.

Other animals can do this, to a limited extent, but the choices of most are still heavily influenced by instinct. This helps, but also constrains the animal. Man makes his decisions based on other factors, besides instinct. Man has now developed to such an extent, in fact, that he may frequently make decisions of how to live his life *without even considering* what his instinct suggests! To enjoy more of what nature is offering to him, he continually *ignores* instinct.

As a result, he lives an unnatural life, based primarily on rationality – an approach which leads him to an over-excessive use of technology, as stereotypes and habits constrain and influence his behavior, compelling him to follow restrictive routines. In doing so, he distracts himself from his deepest objectives. He forgets about the fundamental things he wishes to achieve, and what might otherwise give meaning to his life. Today's society allows – and even encourages – this application of choice.

## **TO OBEY, OR NOT TO OBEY?**

When we are children, adults have a dominant influence over us. They prepare us to live in a world which we might find difficult to understand. Some accept their authority and obey without question, while others rebel and refuse to do as told – or often even as suggested. Both types of children behave according to a developing habit - as time passes and they grow up, this habit becomes stronger.

What are the pros and cons of these two opposite reactions to dominant influence?

***Ada and Eva's story.***

*Ada is a middle-aged lady, well integrated into her environment; she has achieved a seemingly peaceful life. She was taught to obey rules and show respect for her parents, and she always followed their advice. After graduating and starting a family, she spent many years continuing to satisfy the needs, desires and expectations of family and friends. Nowadays, she often spends what little free time she has on the phone or online, trying to maintain contacts and friendships – even though she has no real interest in taking these relationships any further.*

*In the evening, after putting the children to bed, she finally relaxes with her husband in front of the T.V., but she is too tired and distracted to want to exchange more than a few words with him.*

*Yet, she is an exemplary woman, accepted and appreciated by many people, and respected by all.*

Is she really satisfied with her choices? Does she listen to her instinct, or does she set it aside to chase a dream of social approval? And, above all, to what extent is she aware of doing this?

Judging by how she lives her life, everything seems to suggest that Ada allows other people and events to make her decisions for her. If this is true, it is highly possible that she may be deeply dissatisfied with the way she is living, the burdens on her shoulders and the limitations she has set herself. She might even feel tempted at some point to blow it all up and start over, to create the life she truly wants – or, at least perhaps find a space of her own, into which nobody can poke their nose and in which she can finally do what she wants to.

But, how is it possible to find your own space, when you are *right now* in such a constricted situation? And, if she could get the space she wanted, would she then feel guilty about it? In cases like this, it often seems far more convenient to avoid questioning yourself and reviewing your choices. Besides, isn't it important in life to learn how to adapt?

To a certain extent, it is. But, there has to be a limit; the continuous excuse of *adapting* can lead to giving up the habit of *choosing*, and being distracted from one's goals. In reality, we allow other people or events to make our decisions for us – and, how are other people or events expected to know or interpret our unique desires? To what extent are they likely to choose exactly what we had hoped for?

We can now see that Ada goes through life neglecting her instincts (she does not listen to the deeper, truer part of herself, which yearns to express itself differently in life), in order to conform to certain social patterns and expectations. We do not know to what extent this really satisfies her, but we can certainly guess that this is not the ideal solution

to her problems.

*Eva, instead, has chosen not to conform to rules and expectations, and to ignore what others try to tell her to do. She often reacts violently to any situation which might control, condition or limit her, and she strongly opposes those who can readily provide what she desires, because this is inconsistent with her role as a strong, smart woman who knows what is what. She lives alone, is fiercely independent, and has achieved a level success, building a good career in her chosen field.*

Eva seems different from Ada. She appears to be a determined woman, who makes her choices independently. But, judging by her story, can we honestly say that she acts according to her instinct? Her choices might just as well be neither free nor dictated by instinct, but rather reactive.



Figure 3: “The Power of NO”; acrylic on canvas – Aurora Mazzoldi.

In Eva’s case, being reactive means that her choices don’t follow her own goals or desires, but instead an impulse to automatically do the very opposite to what other people do, or suggest she does. Logically, if we always do the opposite on *principle*, then we are not making decisions based on what *we* like, what interests us, or what is conducive to reaching our goals. Our behavior becomes automatic – a mere consequence of the decisions of others. We could even say that, in the choices she makes, Eva responds like a child, sticking out her tongue at every request or suggestion. Ada, conversely and to the contrary, reminds us of the little girl who always lowers her head.

Neither of them objectively examines their situation. Both impose standardized reactions on themselves, in direct response to the decisions and behavior of others: Ada passively accepts things, while Eva reacts by opposing herself to them. It may seem that they live in a completely different (even opposite) way to one another, but each still acts within

the *social patterns* they are now trapped in.

Although, as we have seen, it is necessary to keep these patterns in mind, both seem to rely overly heavily on them when making decisions; whilst one endures, the other fights. And, although it is at first glance in a different way and with different results, it seems that both Ada and Eva are only concerned with the events and patterns of daily life in which they have found their way.

Both *seem* to feel okay with their structured dynamic, but is it really so? Both are well-established in their society and have attained reasonable material wellbeing.

But, in their hearts, are they really satisfied? How would each act if they had only their instinct to listen to?

## **LOST IN THE EMOTIONAL WORLD**

Like Ada and Eva, most people live as if only the everyday exists, and are rooted in the world of *matter*.

This seems the most obvious solution to us; it is the world which we can perceive with our senses – which we can touch and see – but is it the only world we are dealing with?

There are things which we do *not* see, do not touch and do not hear, yet which greatly affect our lives. Take electricity, for example: we use it constantly, almost without even considering its existence; we turn on the light; we start our car; we ride the elevator; we use the computer or watch television – all of this happens mostly without our even being aware of it.

And, when does this only just occur to us? When does it cross our mind that these devices will only work if there is electricity? Exactly: when something stops working.

Something similar happens with our emotions.

We are destined to live with them, and we always feel them, even though we don't normally afford them much importance – at least, as long as everything seems to be working okay! We can live without worrying too much about the messages coming to us from our emotional flow in the background. But, until when? Until something interferes to disrupt our patterns; this can then start a real emotional storm.

### ***Walter's story.***

*Walter is a young entrepreneur, whose girlfriend, Helen, has just left him. So upset, he is having trouble sleeping at night. This makes him less sharp during the day, and he is finding it increasingly difficult to*

*resolve problems at work. He feels as if he is in a constant state of anxiety, and things only seem to be getting worse. Finally, after many unsuccessful attempts to silence the annoying chatter of emotions upsetting him, Walter turns to his doctor for help.*

*The doctor prescribes a treatment, and he follows it, hoping it will resolve his issues. The pills help him to relax, and he is finally able to get more rest, but even though there is more acceptance in him, he is still unable to control his emotions when relying only on pills and willpower; sad thoughts, regrets and, above all, memories, return to him continuously, keeping him in a state of permanent distress. This recreates the same problems for him, over and over, even at work. Alone and abandoned by his girlfriend, he feels disoriented.*

*Without understanding why, he compares his experiences to similar emotions when his little brother was born, many years earlier: then, outwardly, not much had changed in his life – neither his existence or his lifestyle and habits were threatened; he continued receiving the same kindness from his parents – however, when he had sought his mother’s attention, he often felt that she was elsewhere, or busy with the baby; this undermined his emotional security, giving him a sense of loss. And this is just what is happening now, with Helen; her emotional distance feels the same.*

*Walter is confused by these thoughts. Nothing seems to have changed in his daily life, just as nothing changed with the birth of his little brother; from a medical standpoint, everything works exactly as it did before. But now, just as then, he has started to feel sick.*

*His “disease” is neither physical or mental, he knows. He begins to wonder if something is wrong with his emotions; does he have an “emotional illness”?*

*To Walter’s mind, an illness must necessarily be linked to the body; therefore, if there is an emotional illness, there must also be an emotional “body”. If not, after all, then what is it that feels ill?*

The strange part of his situation is that, without his even realizing it, his “emotional body” has been carrying this “disease” with it since childhood – the current situation with Helen has simply revived it. How else is it possible that he still feels the same suffering now as he did when receiving less attention from his mother, decades earlier? Nothing has injured his physical body; it continues to function in its daily life.

But, while yesterday has satisfactorily passed and now no longer exists, the moment that Walter shifts his attention toward the state of his suffering, and enters his “emotional body”, the distinction between past and present suddenly becomes more uncertain. Moreover, in some

moments it seems to completely vanish, and he once again feels the same fear of abandonment he felt so many years earlier – so much so, that he is now unable to distinguish it from his current fears.

Even today, if he thinks of Helen, he knows that the future relationship could very well go in a different direction than his anxiety suggests – maybe even developing into a solid friendship. But he knows that a certain type of emotional contact has been cut off – that the two of them are no longer on the same “wavelength”; that her attention has turned elsewhere – and this makes him suffer inexplicably.

Why “inexplicably”? Because he can’t understand why he is unable to handle his emotional situation. He feels powerless to stop it. He cannot rid himself of the sense of loss which haunts him, knowing that he can never restore that harmony which was giving him security: the security of feeling loved.

*...Being a technician, Walter begins to understand that what he is unable to modify is simply a system of vibrations, somehow similar to radio waves; he can no longer find harmony with Helen; he knows that each of them has now been tuned in to a different wavelength, as if now walking on two parallel streets.*

*How did it happen? At what point is the key to his being able to act on this seemingly elusive system?*

*Well, Walter is treating himself with the pills his doctor has prescribed for him, and it is true that these do ensure a certain state of calm. But, to what extent do they help him to rebalance and avoid suffering, without stunting him or muffling his emotions? Walter realizes that the pills he takes only have a limited effect on him, and starts to wonder why.*

*Now that he has realized there might also be an emotional body, he concludes that pills, being made only of matter, can only directly act on the physical body. Only as a secondary treatment does the physical relaxation they give him promote a partial and only temporary emotional release; for his emotional strain, he would need an “emotional pill”. His doctor seems to agree with this. In fact, he is advised to seek additionally the advice of a psychotherapist, who can provide him with the emotional “pill” he needs to finally come to terms with his problem.*

## **INNER FIGHTS**

Often, when we don't receive something we want, we can turn against

ourselves. We can very easily think that something within us is not working well enough to fulfil our desires.

***Gilda feels unfairly treated by life.***

*Gilda is not satisfied with her body; she would like to be tall and lean, instead of medium-sized and a little on the plump side. She doesn't like her dark eyes, and struggles to accept the first signs of wrinkles, which make her feel ugly. When she looks at herself in the mirror, and sees her reflection, she feels twisted out of shape by life, and it seems that it doesn't have much to offer her anymore. She feels that life is hostile and unjust.*

*She despises her body. She disdains it; she hates it; she can't stand it.*

*For this reason, she neglects it. Without her realizing it, of course, this leads it to decay more rapidly.*

Gilda projects an idealized and unattainable image of herself, but does nothing to try to realize it. This is similar to her unhappy approach to her car: instead of keeping it in good condition, taking efforts to understand its limits and potential, and perhaps trying to boost its performance with technical modification and regular servicing, she drives it angrily on unsuitable routes and neglects its maintenance, in spite of it.

How many other men and women, like Gilda, have a body which does not correspond to their desires and may be even less attractive than she is? Yet, they live better and happier. They may even be more successful with members of the opposite (or same) sex.

Gilda clearly identifies too much with her physical appearance, and places a lot of emphasis on factors which she believes to be of the utmost importance. If her attention were not firmly anchored here, making her unhappy with her appearance and grumpy generally, she might establish deep and meaningful contact with others, including one who might love and appreciate her body as it is. But how can others be expected to do this, if Gilda herself despises her body?

We have seen that Gilda views her body as an enemy, and places too much importance on it. This keeps her a prisoner of certain vibrations in the material world. Walter, on the other hand, does not know how to be rid of an image of happiness which has proven to be illusory; he is now lost in the depths of his emotional world.

What brought Gilda and Walter into such different vibrations? Why has the attention of one remained trapped in the material world, while that of the other is imprisoned in the emotional world?

Every situation we experience causes emotions to rise within us, as vibrations of energy. The more the situation involves us, and the greater its importance to us, the more we tend to cling on to that type of vibration. But what compels us to favor one type over another?

The fact is that we are attracted by and caught up in the energy wave *which appeals to us most*, even if we are not aware of it. To reiterate that, we are attracted to the type of vibration which favors the emotions we *want* to feel, and the experiences we *choose* to live. Each of us lives for those emotional vibrations we feel we need to experience, in a given situation, in the way we have pre-chosen.

Once we have been attracted to a particular wave<sup>2</sup>, due to *vibratory affinity*, over time we become increasingly stuck in situations which favor its maintenance. These situations then link together in a cycle.

To try to extricate ourselves from this labyrinth, instead of opening ourselves up to new solutions, we human beings have developed a defense system - a little out of ignorance and a little out of fear, or habit - which is ineffective and illusory, but to which we cling. It comprises an emotional dam, built of muscular tensions, which serves the purpose of blocking the flow of emotions brought on by that particular emotional wave. Thus, absurdly, we *close ourselves off* to the wave, and to those emotions by which we have chosen to live.

*Closure* can often be a valid way to protect ourselves in the material world: I protect myself from bad weather by shutting myself in my house; I keep people and animals at a distance with doors, windows and locks; if there is an air raid, I'll shut myself in a bomb shelter; and, if I am cold, I cover my body with heavy clothing, so that the cold cannot penetrate. In the material world, the law of impenetrability<sup>3</sup> is very forceful, and *closing* can be ideal in certain situations.

If, however, we attempt to use material means and actions - such as muscles - in worlds which are not material, it is very unlikely we will get the results we desire.

In the emotional world, bodies are in fact penetrable. In spite of our specific vibratory affinity, there is no barrier which separates us from collective emotions, be they of joy, terror or something else. For example, during a war, or an earthquake, panic will likely rub off on us all; the more we try to avoid it, the more energy we will lose. Finally, when we are exhausted, we will stop fighting it, letting it drive us in an unexpected direction.

We probably all agree that it would make more sense to focus our

attention on what to do, instead of engaging in an unequal battle with fear; in order to manage the situation, we would surely need calm and neutrality. But the closure we create prevents us from doing this; all our efforts to try to fight the wave of fear, instead of *letting it flow through us*, do nothing but magnify it.

## **CLOSURE AND DISSATISFACTION**

All of us have automatic closures, and some of these can affect our daily lives and contribute to the reinforcing of limiting fears. In the emotional world, closure can prevent us from getting closer to people with whom we would like to stay in touch. Even when it seems to us that everything is leading us toward another person, this protection mechanism can prevail...

### ***Catherine avoids affection.***

*Catherine was born and grew up in a family in which any display of affection was viewed as a manifestation of weakness; were she to concede to some kind word or affectionate gesture, she would have been treated with irony and contempt.*

*This emotional censorship conditioned her whole life and continued to do so even after her marriage. Catherine did everything out of a sense of duty, and didn't even enjoy taking care of her children, with whom she behaved more like a nanny than a loving mother. Nevertheless, even though she never allowed herself to show affection, she was considered an excellent wife and a caring mother. Catherine, however, worried about her husband getting too close to her; so she faced, with clinical resignation, the not-so-easy (but in some ways easier) duty of keeping her home and managing her family well.*

*When her husband died, she felt lost: her way of life – and her reason for living – had been extinguished. Her children had by now become adults and lived far away from her. All of her family obligations had now ceased. She suddenly found herself alone, without any idea of how to reset her life onto a new course.*

*With time, the suffering she felt at the loss of her lifelong companion decreased, and she even began to sense a feeling of relief growing, for the diminished burden and her regained freedom. But, because of her predisposition to avoid affection, she failed to take advantage of these new opportunities. In fact, it led her to isolate herself more and more. She rarely went outside and avoided meeting her neighbors, because*

*she considered them to be intrusive; she felt protected only within the walls of her apartment. Finally, she managed to close herself completely inside her shell.*

*But, deep inside she felt empty and bored, experiencing only those emotions her closure allowed her to feel. She had protected herself by closing because, beneath the surface of these emotions, others were acting up even more dramatically – and she was very much afraid of them.*

Catherine had taken care not to let her gentle, friendly nature emerge, adhering to the pattern her family had imposed upon her. Their criticism, always lurking within them, had made her insecure, which in turn led her to be wary of anyone who offered her any form of contact. She saw others as enemies, she viewed the world around her as threatening, and she felt the need to protect herself; defending herself had become a habit which she could no longer live without. Her defensive tension, even in muscular terms, had over time become permanent – it felt almost a necessity.

Nor did she resort to selective closure, limited to certain people or situations. Of course, her closure was less strict in those situations she did not perceive as dangerous, but Catherine consciously tried to continuously protect herself from everything which came at her. And this forced her to live in a constant state of alert.

Catherine's is not a rare case. In such a competitive society as ours, many of us live this way.

Considering this situation, what options are available to us? We still have some left, but only within the wave in which we have become stuck; we are confined to a circumscribed space, in which we tend, as we have seen, to increase and automate our closure responses.

So, how do we get out of it?

A certain inner malaise - a continuous dissatisfaction - could be the alarm bell which warns us that something within us is seeking our attention. When that happens, instead of ignoring this message, and feeling increasingly unhappy, we could ask ourselves such questions as: "*What am I missing?*" or "*What makes me so dissatisfied?*"

These are questions to which we may feel an urgent need to respond; it becomes increasingly difficult to ignore them, once asked. They are annoying grains of grit in the gearbox we thought was indestructible. The discomfort we now feel forces us to look at ourselves in a new way.

This is something different to looking at ourselves in the mirror, or

looking inside ourselves, trying to find the fault and fix it; it is more about paying attention to ourselves, observing what is moving within us, and allowing any insights we gather the freedom to rise. We then begin to realize that our previous choices – until now, seemingly logical – were in fact only rational<sup>4</sup>, and that in order not to question them we had closed off access to our intuition. We were afraid that intuition would upset our apparently foolproof reasoning.

But it is only *apparently* foolproof. For, how can any reasoning which bases a *future* choice only on outcomes of the *past* be “foolproof”? You can in no way be sure that any future outcome will be an exact replica of those in the past, and that everything will repeat itself exactly as it was, without any difference.

To demonstrate this, let us consider how some people behave when they go to live in another country. Don’t they often tend to maintain their former habits, without adapting to their new reality? But, how can their old habits protect them in their new environment?

However, even though the future cannot be *predicted*, one can surely get a *sense* of its likelihood. Why not calculate this by giving up at least *some* of that false certainty? And, while doing so, why not consider our emotions, and perhaps even our inclinations and weaknesses? If we do this, we will begin to broaden our understanding, taking into consideration elements which, even if they might seem irrational, may lead to a broader logic. This will prompt us not only to rely on *common sense*, but to go even further and find other solutions, which we can then analyze in the light of reality.

## 2. DEEP CHOICES

Reviewing some of the choices we've made in the past, we may find that many of them were made as a result of conditioning, or were determined by reasons which did not take our goals into consideration. Some of them may now appear unequivocally wrong, or no longer compatible with what we currently want. We might accept that it will take a long time for us to change or correct the choices we made in the past, and that, today, we believe them to be misleading.

However, if things are left as they are – out of indolence, or fear of not being able to remedy the situation – so the consequences will continue to follow. And it will be, at this point, all too easy to blame it on fate, or on others.

We can therefore assume that many people are victims not of destiny, but of their own *superficial* decisions, or decisions which no longer fit their current situation.

How can we spot the superficial choices we have made? By identifying the discrepancy between how we are currently living, and our goals.

We feel conflicted when life doesn't match our deep goals. A part of us continues to live by habits, or by passive compliance to others' wishes and directives. Another part, however, feels under-expressed, and that is where dissatisfaction arises. To find the discrepancy, we need to learn how to look deep inside ourselves. Once we have done so, we will be able to make deep choices.

### THE PARADOX EFFECT

The greatest discoveries of humanity have often occurred as a direct consequence of what we might call the "paradox effect", which can be clarified with these examples:

- The discovery of America. Columbus, going beyond common sense, attempted to reach the Indies from the other side, by sailing westward, rather than eastward, as had always been done.
- It has been said that Newton saw an apple fall, to initiate his study of gravity. He may not have been the first to observe this phenomenon, but he may well have been amongst the first to assume a paradoxical reasoning that: *"The apple falls to the Earth because the Earth attracts it to itself. But, if the Earth attracts the apple to itself, why can't it be the other way around; that is,*

*why can't the apple also attract the Earth to itself?"*

If someone had thought of this last example before Newton did, he might well have considered himself a fool: *"How could the Earth ever fall onto an apple? I must be out of my mind!"* But Newton accepted his own intuition, even if it went against any common sense. He then went on to explain and justify it mathematically, like the great scientist that he was.

If we begin to accept the paradoxes of intuition, we might well experience moments in which we start to consider some aspect of life or other in a completely new way. Furthermore, it may turn out that the logic which was so deeply embedded in that aspect now becomes incomprehensible to us; what seemed normal to us before now is suddenly questioned. You might even be shocked and surprised to realize that you have always thought this way before! When the paradox effect is unleashed, conviction is shaken, our security falters, and some old references collapse.

We can find an example of this effect in the Acts of the Apostles. They say that Saul was struck blind on the road to Damascus<sup>5</sup>, where he was going to punish Christians, and Jesus's voice said to him: *"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"*

*"Yeah, why?"* Saul must have asked himself – and, no matter how he looked at this problem, he couldn't find a valid answer. A question was revolutionizing what had, until now, been his well-established conviction – a belief which had become a keystone, to which one of his inner characters was rigidly connected; a character which had suddenly lost all of its importance, and which Saul was now no longer able to play. The paradox effect can bring into question your whole life (as in the case of Saul), or a single aspect of it.

### ***Sandra's intuition.***

*Sandra is a well-known lawyer in the city. She manages her family well and takes exceptional care of her parents. But she has an issue: she has always been waiting for her mother to recognize her qualities, and all that she does for her. Yet, Sandra never receives a word of kindness or appreciation from her; indeed, she is often criticized and devalued. It is very upsetting.*

*"What do I have to do to receive a word of recognition from my mother?" she asks, opening up to her closest friend, Luisa. "I have always taken care of her, and treated her like a queen, but to her everything is expected. There is never any appreciation, never a thank*

*you, nor even ever an affectionate gesture!”*

*“How many years have you been waiting for this?” replies Luisa.*

*“Ever since I can remember.”*

*“More than fifty years?”*

*“You always remind me of my age! Yes, for more than fifty years.”*

*“Have you ever considered that, after fifty years of waiting, your chances of ever obtaining recognition from your mother are very slim? Are you sure that she can give you what you expect from her – is she even capable?”*

*Sandra falls silent and avoids answering her friend. She goes home, has dinner with her family, and tries to relax in front of the T.V.*

*A few days later, she is walking down the street, thinking about her mother’s harsh and critical behavior, when Luisa’s words come back to mind. She asks herself: “Why do I keep waiting for something I will never get?”*

*She cannot think of an answer to this question – and with that, the paradox effect is unleashed.*

*She feels foolish, uncomfortable and confused, as she realizes how difficult it has been to give up the expectations she has of her mother. Emotions fight within her, until suddenly a new possibility occurs to her:*

*“I have lots of people who appreciate me. Why don’t I just enjoy their recognition, and give up on waiting for my mother’s?”*

*She feels relieved at this idea, as if finally shaking off a weight.*

This is an example of how choice can be turned upside down, to your advantage.

Although, can we really call it “upside down”? More accurately, perhaps we speak of choices available on two different levels. If Sandra stays on the *surface* of herself, then choosing to continue waiting for her mother’s attention appears logical – as the hope of achieving what she wants, sooner or later, also appears logical. If, however, she goes deeper than the surface, with the help of her friend she can perhaps think of factors she hadn’t yet considered:

- I’ve had over fifty years of wasted effort;
- Will my mother ever satisfy me?
- How much frustration have I expended waiting for this?
- Could I get what I wish for elsewhere, and with less effort?

The emergence of new factors can trigger a change in the level,

favoring intuition and the paradox effect.

So, what is *paradoxical* about suddenly realizing this reality?

We need to consider that we are used to living habitually and in accommodating fashion, without paying much attention to what happens (Sandra ignored decades of failure with her mother). All the while, we are enticed by an “*inner movie*” (for Sandra, this depicted her mother one day becoming aware of her value and congratulating her), made up of fantasy, planning and reactivity – none of which have anything much to do with objective reality. When a flash of awareness crosses our limitations, we suddenly find reality; we suddenly become aware of it, and the feeling dazzles us. Accustomed as we are to living in an illusion, this unexpected contact with concrete reality seems to us a paradox.

And now, crucial questions arise:

- *Which of the two choices will best solve my problem?*
- *Which one attracts me the most: the superficial one or the deeper one?*

Each of these two levels of choice offers us a different path:

1. Learn from our life experiences. This is the slowest, most indirect and most superficial way. We go from dissatisfaction to dissatisfaction, and from failure to failure, until – with time and the experiences we are accumulating – we arrive at an understanding of what we really want, and how to obtain it.
2. Begin to wonder what our real goal is and, once we find it, prepare to reach it. Following a valid goal helps us to understand which choices are advantageous for us, because of course they lead us toward it. During this process, we are able to collect and process the data necessary to overcome obstacles, while continuing to give way to intuition, which helps us operate within reality.

If we opt for the second route, we are on an *introspective* path.

When we talk about *introspection*, we immediately think of something theoretical; something which is alien to reality. But, remaining within reality does not mean taking into consideration:

- just what happens around us;
- just what happens inside us;
- but both.

Introspection also helps us solve the problems of the material world –

these are, in turn, important stimuli to help us understand what is not working within us.

The introspective researcher can only be an all-round researcher, and he is careful not to limit his research. Therefore, he searches both outside and inside himself, depending on the nature of the problem being faced.

### **FACING THE THREE Ms: MORTALITY, MALADY, MALAISE...**

It is fair to say that superficial choices don't help us when we are facing a big problem.

#### ***Nestor's experience.***

*Nestor had reached that point in his life where it had become more difficult to avoid asking himself certain questions. He had passed important milestones and obtained a certain comfort level, was in good health and, above all, had enough free time to take care of himself. Then, one day, he was diagnosed with a very serious medical condition.*

*The specialist he went to advised that he would need to undergo a particularly invasive operation, urgently, the outcome of which was not certain. However, Nestor also consulted a specialist center, where he was advised against the operation, because it was potentially dangerous and could have a devastating effect on his life; instead, he was directed toward pharmacological treatment which, whilst long and annoying, may prevent the need for surgical intervention.*

*It was not an easy decision, particularly as Nestor had some doubts about the safety and efficacy of the pharmacological therapy. However, even with this uncertainty, and with no rational explanation, he was confident in the treatment. So, he patiently submitted to it, and continued until he recovered.*

*After passing this difficult test, he felt he had made the right decision. He found himself wondering if it was luck or the choice he had made which allowed him to dodge the two ugly "M"s: "mortality" and "malady". "Luck certainly played a role," he said to himself, "but if I had chosen to go through with the operation, I might have risked my life, or even ended up permanently disabled."*

*He realized how important it had been to choose wisely, and he understood that some choices can mean the difference between living or dying. He reflected on the times he had managed to avoid accidents, including serious ones, or other situations which could have put his life at risk. "I choose, therefore I exist," he muttered to himself.*

*At this point, he seemed to hear an internal voice, which whispered to him: "Yes, you coped well this time. But how do we connect the third 'M' to these events?"*

*And so began a silent conversation with himself:*

*"What other M? As if the first two were not enough to contend with."*

*The voice became more insistent: "Have you forgotten 'malaise'?"*

*"What malaise?"*

*"When you are alone, or in certain situations, do you not feel something squirming inside you? Something you are trying everything you can to silence?"*

*"Come to think of it, that is true; sometimes I feel like that and I don't know why."*

*"Perhaps that is what some people call 'sick of life', or 'existential malaise'."*

*"I surround myself with friends all the time. I am always cheerful, and try to make sure I always have things to do... yet... Is this what I am doing? Trying everything I possibly can not to hear this malaise?"*

*Nestor felt a weird anger rising in him; he felt he had been suddenly put on the spot, without any defense. "Why can't I get out of this malaise? There is no reason for it! I have recovered my health; I have enough money to live well; I have a job and a family which bring me a lot of happiness... What possible reason could I have for feeling unsatisfied and unhappy? I don't understand it. I need a slap to wake me up!"*

*Then, again, he heard the internal voice, which was now starting to annoy him: "How can you ever feel satisfied? If you keep hiding things from yourself, you will constantly be fighting yourself!"*

## **BRINGING PEACE**

When children want to assert themselves with adults, they have their own methods. They might, for example, throw tantrums; scream and shout; rebel; act out; stamp their feet; cry; or act silly – these methods can give them a certain perceived degree of power.

One of the methods which most often wins out is to become defensive and close in on themselves. They might become hostile, not speak to

anyone, push away those who try to get close to them, or refuse to eat – all of which can be extremely distressing for their parents.

If these closure tactics work for us as children, why shouldn't they also work as adults?

The reality is that they only work against someone who cares or feels responsibility for the person using them. Thus, as adults, they can cease to be successful methods, even when used against parents.

The problem is, however, that they become habitual; we continue to have confidence in their supposed effectiveness, even after this has been long since lost. And we don't want to give up the power they granted us many years ago.

But, even when they are no longer working with others, we habitually continue to maintain some of these childhood behaviors within ourselves. If we are dissatisfied or disappointed with something which is not turning out quite as we had hoped, what is our reaction? If, for example, we are unsure of our physical appearance, or of our abilities, or our actions, do we really try to find a solution, or do we continue to struggle against those parts of us which are not what we would like them to be? Do we perhaps maintain the hope that something or someone, upon seeing us so unhappy, will intervene to fix things, as our parents did? In this way, we hurt ourselves.

We obviously do not have the wisdom of Odysseus who, after accepting Athena's suggestion (which could suggest his own intuition)<sup>6</sup>, interrupted the war against the kinsmen of the suitors he had killed;<sup>7</sup> Odysseus understood that pursuing the war to its bitter end, between two factions of his own people, would increasingly weaken the state over which he was king – even if he “won”. How many of us realize that the battles we wage against some of our own internal aspects (simply because they do not correspond to certain mental patterns) end up *weakening us*, more and more each day?

Everyone makes inappropriate choices. Too often, we follow a mechanism which causes us to decide not on the basis of reality, and of our goals, but on the basis of motivations which lead elsewhere. For example: we choose to follow the patterns of other people; we choose under the emotional pressure of the moment; we choose out of the fear of some fantasized consequences; or, we choose to obtain some recognition we might never have; or...; or...; or...

If, over time, we become aware of the mechanisms which compromise our choices, we might be able to recognize our malaise – the third *M* – and to savor life more and more. This gradual transition, from feeling like the victim to becoming the protagonist in our own lives, will allow us – even if only on some occasions – to begin to tell ourselves:

*“I choose, therefore I live!”*

## **WAYS TO GROW EXPERIENCE**

Among the many ways available to deal with life, there are two which might be particularly useful to consider:

- Taking advantage of the help and advice of others, who have learnt from their own experiences;
- Wanting to do it our own way.

### ***The first way.***

*A small child wants to touch the candle’s flame on his first birthday cake. His mom tells him, “No, it burns!” and tries to push his hand away. But, the child does not understand what the word “burn” means, because he has not yet experienced it; he insists, crying because he wants to touch the flame which so fascinates him.*

*So, his mother takes his hand and slowly brings it closer to the flame; when the child gradually senses its heat, he instinctively moves to retract it. His mother has therefore led him to understand what the word “burn” means, and that the fire shouldn’t be touched.*

We accept things better when we can understand them. *A fortiori* – those who take advantage of the help and advice of others – can make good use of the experiences lived through situations before, to know, in advance, some aspects lying in the road ahead.

### ***The second way.***

*If that child is determined to do it alone, he will not accept help from any source – especially if he has not asked for it. He will not want to be accompanied on his journey of discovery, nor allow another to take his hand, in order to show him anything. He will therefore consider his mother’s help a constraint, forcing him to do something he doesn’t want to, and he will scream. He wants to understand and experiment in his own way, and will learn things in due course – when life provides him with the right experiences.*



Figure 4: “Mother 6: Loneliness”; acrylic on canvas –  
Aurora Mazzoldi.

Such children are said to have “quite a temper”, and will more likely become rebellious teenagers. They will learn everything later, when the opportunity arises, and it may be a more difficult and painful experience; whilst this might give them the chance to understand things in a more tangible way, they will probably have to pay a higher price for doing so.

Which choice is best for us?

In most cases, from time to time we will make temporary choices corresponding to our character, and to the situation in which we find ourselves. The decision on how to best organize our life can therefore only be *ours*; only we know the scene in which we operate, and only we have the means to understand it.

***Adelina is stuck in the past.***

Everyone chooses their own way to express themselves, in the direction in which they would like to go. But, things are not simple for any of us; there are parts of us which disagree with what we seem to want and, by

doubts and fears, try to force their program upon us.

Why? Because these are programs established long ago, in different situations, which we have not yet exhausted. Since we do not want to give up small attachments or ephemeral advantages which we might still consider important, we continue to give them energy – in this way, we keep them operational.

*Five-year-old Adelina decided: “I don’t want to grow up. If I grow up, I won’t be able to play with my dolls anymore!”*

*She liked to get lost in the enchanted world of her games and toys, and she avoided adults, always nervous and worried that she would resemble them one day. Above all, she didn’t want to live like them.*

*For Adelina, the adult world was made up of serious things, which left no room for toys. Her father always had to do something, often complaining about his many burdensome commitments. Even Adelina’s mother could scarcely find the time to take care of her, let alone play with her sometimes. Only in a world of her own could she find space for her games and her imagination, and avoid the suffering she felt when left alone.*

Adelina protected herself by taking refuge and seeking safety in fantasy; she could not accept a reality which frightened her, and one she would have to face growing up. No one had explained to her that reverie, fun and games continue to accompany us, even as adults, and that we never stop dreaming, fantasizing and playing – even if dolls are no longer our favorite toys! No one told her that, as we grow, fun things will find their own way in our lives.

She might continue feeling like this, and if she continues to build a protective wall inside herself – in order to exorcize the fear of growing up - and expends too much energy on the old programs, she could end up slowing down her development. Adelina might want to stop time – don’t we all – but sometimes, when things are outgrown and no longer needed, it would be better to let them go. If we hold them within us, they can prevent us from reaching new goals.

### ***If you have learnt to walk, why continue to crawl?***

Children often believe that growing up means becoming adults, and therefore being able to do what they want. Adelina, however, as we have seen, believes the opposite: that as an adult, playing with dolls will no longer be allowed. She does not know that many adults continue to

maintain childlike attitudes, and that becoming an adult does not necessarily mean growing up.

To grow, we need to be like the snake: leave your old skin behind. Although this can be frightening, we should remember that, unlike the snake, we can abandon ours gradually, as we come to understand and accept that we no longer need it. If we choose to keep carrying it with us, then it is because we want to remain in the fantasy world of *our* rights and *others'* duties; we are not accepting that things evolve.

But, without this gradual evolution, it is as if we are continuing to create the burden we carry on our shoulders: that of expecting our supposed rights and the advantages of the past. The farther we journey, the bigger and heavier the burden becomes, crushing us under its weight; it slows us down, oppresses us and exhausts us. We will surely become adults, all the same, but we will walk more upright, faster and with a lighter burden, if we can learn to let go of:

- old rights we no longer have;
- desires which have now lost their attractiveness;
- attachments which hold us back and immobilize us.

We don't need to make great renunciations or sacrifices; it is only necessary to simply consider things from a different point of view. We do, however, need to accept the fear of our childhood, and let it go.

It is also important to bear in mind that the problems we leave unsolved weigh on our shoulders. Old fears and tenacious prejudices, if they are not worked out, become a very heavy burden. Instead of wasting time processing them, wouldn't it be easier to try to shake them off, with willpower?

To be honest, forcing this would not get you very far. Elaboration is a *slow and gradual* process, which allows us to understand and rebalance, little by little, our internal disharmony. Consider that within us there is a natural growth booster, which works in that same way as the seed which will turn into a tree. The needs of a sapling, a young tree or a fully developed tree will be quite different from those of the seed; nor can the seed predict in advance these needs.

For this reason, therefore, rather than striving to grow, we should instead use our efforts to remove obstacles which might slow down this natural boost.

Our idea of *growth* usually refers to patterns or paths which, like a channeled river, tend to lead us toward realizations which only take place in the material world. Only as we are heading toward the end of life do we realize that, even if we have managed to make a lush and fruitful tree grow outside of us, it is not enough: our inner sprout was unable to progress and develop. Whilst a part of us is content and seemingly

satisfied, there is another crying out, over the years, and pressing harder to harder to emerge.

How can we give that part of us a voice?

By listening to what is going on inside and admitting that we have done something wrong. Clinging to our prejudices as if they were lifesavers, even if they do give us a sense of security, will only allow us to drift. If we want to grow, it is better that we learn to accept every kind of emotion which emerges within us, without hesitation. Thus, we will learn to know ourselves, to understand ourselves, and to face our fears.

He who has not succeeded in building himself according to his natural drive, but has instead forced his growth in a direction which does not take into consideration all of his needs, makes his burden a great deal heavier, because of his regrets.

*How can I understand if I am neglecting my deepest desire?*

Only if you follow the direction and pulse of nature will you always head toward something satisfying. You must learn to listen to the signs of dissatisfaction and boredom within, which will warn you when you are not following your dream.

The seed develops to express its potential and its nature, not to follow patterns of behavior or duty; our inner growth goes hand in hand with the development of this seed.

It is natural that people living in the physical body, with all of its pressing needs, should be led above all to deal with material problems. However, there have always been people who have learnt to explore even non-physical realities - such as the emotional world – in depth. Some have gone further still, pushing themselves into even more impalpable worlds.

In terms of the latter, we speak of *transcendence*. They are people who are able to transcend human nature, and venture into increasingly deeper realities. But how is it possible to get there whilst still living in the world of matter? By adding to the care and interest in our physical bodies, with the exploration and discovery of lesser-known *energy* bodies, found through passages made by knowledge, awareness, understanding and acceptance. It is not a question of ceasing to deal with the material body, which allows us to live; nor is it a question of going beyond, and perhaps despising and disdaining this delicate self-regulating structure which allows us to experience our planet; it is rather a process of *bodily integration* (for now, the physical and emotional), in which these bodies act simultaneously within us, but at different levels.

There is no use in feeling superior about favoring your emotional over your wonderful physical body, and the complex structures which keep it alive; compare this to a sailboat, enabling us to travel and explore the

world around us: what skipper would neglect (and perhaps even despise)  
the only physical means he has to continue sailing?

## Part 2: A PATH TO WELLBEING

*“πάντα ῥεῖ (everything flows)”*

Heraclitus.<sup>8</sup>

Reality is in constant motion and we are constantly looking for certainties. Given the choice, we would rather remove all that we don't like from it and keep everything that we do. But we are facing the conveyor belt of life, and just like the T.V. game show, we have to take what we can from the belt as it passes us; we can choose to take some of the things that we want, but we can in no way take them all and, *if we want to take new things, we must return old ones.*

### 3. THE PLEASURE FROM KNOWING OURSELVES

Knowing better how some mechanisms act within ourselves gives us the key to solving our inner problems, and to better living. We can even learn that, by giving back some of the old things, life can become a pleasure and an adventure. We can look forward to receiving new things, once we accept that we must return some of the things we have previously borrowed.

Should we instead choose to focus on the things we would like to keep, and are not willing to put back on the conveyor belt? If we do, then we are destined to stagnate.

Why is that? Because, by remaining attached and holding on to things, we do not take into consideration the alternatives life is offering us. We stop moving forward and remain stuck in the same situation.

#### ***Clara's experience***

*Clara's marriage ended very badly. She had never fulfilled her dream of having children with Michel, whom she believed to be the love of her life. After a few years together, he became seriously ill and, in spite of her extensive care and continuous support, he died.*

*Many years had now passed since that terrible experience, but Clara continued to live in the memories of that union, with the man who had been her ideal husband. As much as she tried to find characteristics of Michel in others, nobody – really, nobody – ever showed signs of them. Clara knew, deep down, that no one can ever be the exact copy of another person, and so she saw herself destined to live with just her memories and regrets.*

*Then, one day, one of those things happened which – even though apparently something common in normal, everyday life – had the explosive potential to upset all of her programmed assumptions and change the course of her life. Her best friend Adele came to visit her, very upset; in tears, she told Adele about the umpteenth serious argument she'd had with her partner. Clara listened with understanding and participation – as always.*

*But, this time, something in her friend's story resonated with her: a memory which she had kept well-hidden inside. "That reminds me of an argument I once had with Michel!" At that moment, she paused to relive the bitterness of some of the quarrels she'd had with her husband. "But how could we have argued like that? We were such a close-knit*

*couple!”*

*As the days passed, doubts continued to creep in; memories which she would have never allowed to emerge before now surfaced without warning, showing her a different, hidden reality. “Maybe things were different to how I remember them.”*

*This process of consideration continued until, one day, she felt anger growing inside of her. When she wondered why, she suddenly remembered all of the times she and her husband had argued – and the seriousness of some of them. And, suddenly, the truth came to her:*

*“I wasn’t happy at all! My life wasn’t at all the one I wanted!” she said to herself. “Why have I always told myself that we had this perfect marriage?”*

*Two possible answers occurred to her:*

- 1. She had felt guilty when Michel got sick. “What if he got sick because of all the arguments? What if it’s all my fault he died, because of my always needing to be right?” When he had become ill, she had chosen to indulge him in everything, hoping to silence the guilt-worm which gnawed at her heart. She had clung to the idea that, if he returned to good health, theirs would be a perfect union, and this helped to motivate her in supporting him.*
- 2. After Michel’s death, she refused to relive a marriage comprising of quarrels, sickness and death. She chose to shield herself from this truth, and in doing so, her subconscious warned – as most would – that she should avoid any future likelihood of repeating it. The perfect strategy was thus: “Because I will never again find such a wonderful relationship, I will close myself to new opportunities.” The reality was, in fact, that Clara was closing herself to new experiences because she was afraid.*

We have just seen an example of “targeted adjustment”, which Clara had made from exasperating idealization of her marriage. So, what caused it?

The fear of venturing into something new – and potential for more pain in the future. Clara was trying to convince herself that she had already experienced the best there was, and this could never be repeated – it was her excuse for choosing to stay alone for the rest of her life. And, as long as she continued to believe this lie, other possibilities were closed to her. The reality, of course, was very different. She was afraid of being in another relationship, and she didn’t know how else to deal with her fear; it was easier to ignore and deny it.

*It was easier to give up, than to take a risk.*

She could not properly evaluate new possibilities, because she was continually comparing them with a perfect union which had never existed. She remained still, her life stuck in the past; she had stopped evolving.

## **INNER WELLBEING**

In our society, most people think that wellbeing depends solely on having money, looks and prestige, or on enjoying good health and having fun, etc. Without all of this, how could we possibly feel *accomplished*? Furthermore, since it is difficult to have all of these things at the same time – or even to have enough of them – we tend to blame something outside of ourselves if we don't feel satisfied.

So, when we experience emotional distress, what do we tend to do? We seek comfort: from a friend, a tranquilizer, or an extra glass of something. We believe that if we can fix external factors, we can also solve our inner problems. We attempt to distract ourselves from our malaise, with more money, more prestige, more social affirmation or by improving our aesthetics.

We do not always realize that alongside a vision of wellbeing based only on external factors there is, quite rightly, another which is less well-known, because it is more difficult to understand and apply.

According to this vision, our wellbeing does not only depend on the accumulation of wealth, bodily treatments and other interventions for physical health, but also – and, especially – on a deepening of our understanding. Of course, this understanding includes the search for physical wellbeing, while also considering our natural self-regulation. We may suppose that our health and wellbeing could be almost perfect (thanks to self-adjustment) if we live in a way which does not hinder and weaken this wonderful mechanism.

At this point, one might wonder if the same criterion applies to animals, who live according to nature – the answer to this is not so straightforward. Even in animals, the natural action of rebalancing can be altered and compromised and, moreover, they do not have available the means that we do to realize this and remedy it. This is apparent when, for example, while following their instinct they find themselves under stress, due to an inability to find food, or prolonged situations of fear or discomfort.

There is an external, environmental and social reality - a constantly changing reality – with which humans and animals must learn to cope. Failure to adapt can create stress, both physically and emotionally, and

in the long run may lead to states of deterioration. And, whilst the animal cannot realize this, human beings have tools and resources to do so – we just don't always use them to our advantage. By ignoring our emotional/mental/spiritual component, and entrusting our wellbeing exclusively to our physical care, rigid rational control and drastic or invasive interventions – such as exhausting training at the gym, or even cosmetic surgery – most of us only achieve an incomplete state of wellbeing.

At the core of this research is that people often have a *non-acceptance* of themselves – a deeper discomfort – which they project externally (others do not love or admire them, for example, because they are not attractive or physically toned). We are fragmented, and there are parts of us fighting against instinct. So, they hinder its ability to provide self-restoration.

## **WE ARE MADE UP OF MANY PARTS**

With some praiseworthy exceptions, we tend to think that we are unitary. The word “*I*” leads us to believe that within us there is a solitary subject, who chooses and decides what it wants, rather than what “*we*” want. But, is this belief the reality? If it is, then why do we continue to change our ideas and plans so frequently? One day we *crave* something; the next day we no longer care for it – because we want something else.

Sometimes, it might be the case that we want to take a decision, but doubt, hesitation and an otherwise lack of interest warns us that something within us does not agree. Or, it may be that one of our inner parts wants to do something, but another refuses to cooperate. This can happen with students, for example: they start to study, in preparation for an exam, when they suddenly experience such a dislike for studying that they have to stop and do something else. They rarely realize that a real struggle has broken out inside them, between two parties with different desires and objectives: an *inner conflict*. These conflicts occur between internal subjects who have different visions and interests.

And, normally there are more conflicts within us - so much so that it is not unlikely we might find ourselves in chaos, no longer knowing which parts of ourselves we should listen to.

### ***Alice, Astolfo and the “inner school-bus”.***

*It was a warm May morning, and Alice was in her station wagon,*

taking her daughters to the school at the end of the village. She had to stop at the last roundabout to let the school-bus pass, because it had right of way. But then, as she prepared to pull out behind it, something strange happened: the school-bus made a complete circle of the roundabout and was now passing in front of her again. Even more strangely, instead of driving toward the school, the bus took the wrong exit from the roundabout, which ran along the edge of the village and a stretch of the woods, before rejoining with the route Alice had come from, farther back. The pupils seemed terribly upset by it all.

The situation seemed so absurd and unusual – the incomprehensible circling of the roundabout; the pupils shouting excitedly; the unusual direction the bus was taking – that Alice was curious and wanted to know more. But it was already getting late, and her only concern was getting her daughters to their lessons before the school-bell rang.

On her way home, after dropping them off, she saw the school-bus again; now it was empty and parked in a clearing, next to a path which led into the woods. She thought about alerting the school principal, but reasoned that he must be aware of the bus's detour.

A little later, when she went out to go shopping, she saw the bus again, parked near the amusement arcade.

After shopping, she saw the same bus again, with all of the pupils safely on board, and happily preparing to head to school.

What were they doing? Alice was curious, and visited the principal to ask for an explanation of the worrying situation.

He explained to her, with some amusement, that in agreement with parents and teachers he had decided to conduct an experiment; he wanted to ascertain whether he could successfully motivate students to study more with innovations and incentives. He went on to enlighten Alice how, in previous months, he had tried to make lessons more interesting by using various unconventional methods, such as:

- greater use of audio-visuals;
- more flexibility during school hours;
- competitions for the children to win prizes;
- outdoor classes and guided tours.

It seemed to him now that the time had come to verify the results of all of this extra effort. So, he had commissioned Astolfo - the driver of the school-bus, himself a former schoolteacher – to give the pupils more freedom this Monday morning. The pupils could decide what they wanted to do in the first two hours of school, and they had the bus completely at their disposal. But there were two conditions: they were to be in class no later than the end of the second hour, and they had to stay together the entire time. Astolfo would support their choices, but

*he was free to overrule them should he feel the need, and could propose an early return to school as an alternative to their decisions, were it deemed necessary.*

*The experiment did not go the way the principal had expected. When circling the roundabout, there had been a lively discussion between the pupils; ultimately, those who shouted the loudest had imposed their will. Some of the students would have preferred to go to school, but the majority – elated by this moment of freedom, and coerced by a rather burly and resolute boy – had decided otherwise.*

*After having parked the school-bus and accompanied them a mile or two into the woods, the driver had convinced them to go back to school. But then, suddenly, the amusement arcade appeared on the road before them – more attractive than ever before – and immediately ignited the enthusiasm of the pupils.*

*When it came time to interrupt the fun and return to school, grumbling and reluctant, the boys resigned themselves to their lessons – although it took all of Astolfo’s determination to bring them back to class. They returned just in time for the third hour.*

*All were apparently unhappy – though for different reasons:*

- *Some regretted having missed an interesting lesson;*
- *Some had wanted to spend their free time another way;*
- *Some hadn’t wanted to return to school at all.*

*After simply following the decisions of the most authoritative boy, the class had become fragmented; this fragmentation had created disharmony.*

*That evening, before falling asleep, Astolfo thought for a long time about the experiment. He considered how things had gone, and how he’d ultimately had to impose his authority on the kids, in order to get them back to school in time.*

*“But it was not only the kids I had to assert myself with,” he reflected: “I actually had to contain the desire to enforce my own will on the kids – that of cutting short their discussions and not waiting for them to come to an agreement.”*

*He considered the conflicting parts inside himself, and what they would have had him do:*

- *“one part of me, fed up with listening to them shouting and arguing, wanted to just leave them there and go”;*
- *“another part was calling me a fool, for participating in the*

*experiment in the first place”;*

- *“another part felt backed into a corner – the victim of a situation I couldn’t deal with”.*

*“Fortunately,” Astolfo concluded, “my most reasonable component prevailed in this inner struggle I had inside: the one which decided to be tolerant and patient. I was able to foresee the consequences of those impulses: as well as being inappropriate to the situation, they would have compromised the experiment.”*

*At this point, Astolfo mused: “This morning, I could barely manage the school-bus kids – how could I manage a whole bus-load of kids if I struggled to manage even my own ‘inner kids’? What if there were a whole school-bus, loaded with unruly kids, inside me?!”*

This example helps us to understand some of the causes of our malaise. Our team of “inner kids” is not easy to coordinate, if we do not know how to rule it – it is difficult to *know* how, without having learnt how.

So, what chance do I have, if I am the driver? What are my choices? Here are some things I could do:

- Intimidate the kids. But then, what atmosphere and what environment could I then find myself in?
- Impose strictness. But then, as soon as I relax it, things will surely return to the way they were before.
- Try to persuade them to be more reasonable. That carries a risk of endless discussion and debate!
- Accept that they are “just being kids”, and be more permissive, or try to appease them. But, of course, the risk of leaving everything in their hands is self-explanatory.
- Get discouraged and just give up! Let them do what they want. Of course, the situation could degenerate rapidly.

For the driver of a real school-bus, it would be difficult to find a single solution to apply to all cases which might arise. Your experience and knowledge of the kids will suggest, at the time, what is the best course of action, whilst keeping at the forefront the importance that it is up to the driver (and not the kids) to manage things.

In terms of your “inner school-bus”, this is a problem with which we must all deal throughout our daily lives. How often are we presented with thoughts or emotions which disturb our journey in life, or even

make us deviate from our path? And how many times, when we don't want to indulge them, rather than reflecting on the situation, do we:

- push them back?
- fight them with other thoughts?
- distract ourselves, in order not to hear them?

## **IS THERE A RIGHT CHOICE?**

### ***Olivier's story.***

*Olivier is offered a new job, more prestigious than his current one and with better pay. After much consideration, he accepts it, hoping that he will live a more comfortable life, and be held in higher esteem by others. In doing so, something inside him rejoices.*

*But his euphoria does not last long; he soon begins to feel the fear of change. He starts to find his sleep disturbed by such thoughts as:*

*“Can I make it in this new job? ... Isn't it a little too complicated for me? ... I'm not sure if I'm up to the challenge ... Maybe I was foolish to accept it ... How can I solve new problems when they arise, if I've never even been able to fix the old ones? ... I have no experience in this job; it is impossible for me ... Aunt Jasmine was right: I'm impulsive; I never think before acting.”*

*These thoughts go over and over in his head, preventing him from sleeping at night.*

*“Perhaps it would be better to withdraw...”*

Is Olivier really preparing himself to increase his wellbeing?

If he now gave up the new job, or if he had never accepted it at all, would he be calmer now? It's impossible to say for sure. Perhaps one of his inner parts - one of the kids on his inner school-bus – would find further fault because of it: *“I'm always a coward! A golden opportunity comes along and I let it go. How will I ever achieve anything in life?”*

Supposing he had taken time to decide; would he be less critical? The attack from within might have simply changed its approach: *“The usual indecisiveness! I stand around like an idiot, thinking it through; meanwhile, my employer decides to give my job to someone else. Will I ever be brave enough to take on the slightest responsibility?”*

Olivier doesn't know how to find peace of mind. It has almost become so problematic to him now, that by being offered this opportunity he has in fact somehow been wronged by his employer. Will there ever be an outcome which suits him?

In situations like this, inner wellbeing is likely to be something of a chimera? Indeed, whatever we do will never be ideal for some part of us or other.

In this example, Olivier must decide between yes, no or what comes after, but nothing will satisfy him fully; one of his inner parts will shout to be heard, and he will feel unhappy anyway.

Despite all the strategies we use to achieve wellbeing, don't we, like Olivier, risk always being unsatisfied and unhappy? Is there no way out of it?

In fact, a solution exists, which the ancient Greeks had inscribed in the temple of Apollo, in Delphi. It reads:

***“Γνῶθι σεαυτόν” (know thyself)! <sup>9</sup>***

This is a maxim which we may have heard often but, as well as being applied very rarely (because we usually don't know how to apply it), who amongst us really understands it?

When we look at ourselves, we see our *social image*, or when we want to be more introspective, our unmet needs or unfulfilled desires. Who of us thinks we need go further?

We often try to convince ourselves that, by avoiding having to deal with our deep inner processes, we are protecting ourselves from unhappiness and discomfort. But, even if we believe this and go on acting this way, not only will we resolve nothing, but we will also become increasingly unhappy and dissatisfied.

How much longer must we continue numbing ourselves, to avoid facing problems, before we understand that this does not lead us anywhere? Once we understand that this is not the right solution, are we ready to venture into little-known territories? Or, maybe we are looking for some other escape route?

A



*Figure 5: “Know thyself” (in Greek) – photo by Mladifilozof, Wikimedia Commons.*

## **JOURNEY WITHIN OURSELVES**

Self-knowledge is recommended by the great philosophical systems of antiquity, and by all the great religions. It is not only our right; it is also our primary requirement – this need is just as important as the discovery of the world around us.

As adults, recovering the sense of discovery of the surrounding world, which we had as children, can make our lives much more interesting. Starting out on an inner journey to discover ourselves is fascinating. We often like to spend our holidays as tourists in other countries, but the inner world is no less interesting and beautiful than the external one; have we ever considered that we can spend our vacations much closer to home – dedicate them, in fact, to discovering ourselves?

In the distant past, tourism barely existed, and the exploration of the world was a task for explorers and researchers, who would then describe their journeys for others; people would read these accounts and dream. Later, we found that we could travel and explore for ourselves, and discover for ourselves things that the explorers could not tell us. Meeting different people, even in places not too far from home, is more satisfying to us than reading the journals of Stanley or Livingstone.

Similarly, in the future, exploration to discover our inner world may become more fascinating to us than reading any psychoanalytic texts.

This predilection to research, both outside and within us, has been summarized thus by the Spanish poet Ramón Jiménez:

*“Don't let a day go by without catching its secret,  
big or short.*

*Let your awake life be a daily discovery.<sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup>*

...

*No one will ever be able to perceive as I do the fragrance of the  
perfume of a rose. (Aurora Mazzoldi, 2019)*

If you are planning to take a trip, it's good to know how you are going to proceed. There are, of course, many possibilities (different paths to the same goal); the ways of the Lord are endless.

We can find one of the possibilities for starting our inner journey in that school-bus full of unruly kids, who represent our inner parts. This similarity helps us to understand the situations and environments in which we live. It offers us a way to observe ourselves, and to extricate ourselves from life's difficulties. It helps us to deepen our knowledge of what works within us, and to contact those inner parts which, in this book, we will call “forces”<sup>12</sup>.

Like the kids on the school-bus, these forces continually interfere with our path. If, instead of helping them to grow up, we give up managing them, they will lead us astray, into directions which we have not chosen.

Fortunately, not all emotional school-buses work like this. Well-managed forces can become useful to us; the journey by bus, with a team of nice, well-behaved kids, can be more enjoyable than a trip in solitude. But, can we choose the kids with whom we travel? Unfortunately, in this respect, our choice is very limited. We can, however – always keeping our goal in mind – not allow ourselves to be influenced by the individual desires of any of the children (by not identifying with their expectations); we can coordinate the whole situation, by taking into consideration the interests of the whole group. Is this difficult? Yes, because we tend to be fragmented. If we try to counter this fact, we resort to reasoning – but reasoning is often controlled by the kid who shouts the loudest, and who will use this method to self-assert.

Is there a way to make things easier?

We must keep in mind that our rationality is and remains a very useful tool, but for the complex organization of an inner journey, we need an even more trusted consultant: *intuition*.

## **MAKING JEWELS OF OUR EXPERIENCES**

To begin to discover what happens inside us, we must first clarify where

we want to go (what it is that we want) and how ready we are to do so (the price we are willing to pay). To discover this, it is sufficient to observe where our interests lead us and where our emotional forces push us – in other words, which kids on the school-bus we're listening to.

The experiences already accumulated and the setbacks we have previously suffered may have already led us to ask questions, but perhaps what we have discovered about ourselves does not match our own mental picture. Should we then revolutionize everything within us? Or even deny our experiences?

The experiences we have lived – even if they seem painful or deplorable to us – are some of the most precious things we have, if we know how to use them correctly. They rightly become our treasure; our *jewels*. So, why should we deny or reject them?

It is instead not a question of giving up or changing anything, but of deepening and making better use of what we already have. It is also a matter of broadening our vision; we should try to build new opportunities for ourselves, instead of denying those we have already exploited, or wasting those which are presently within reach. In this way, we can find our way out of the narrow world we have created around us.

We could, for example, make precious all those experiences of malaise that our body has made us live through, in the times we have not taken its needs into consideration. How? By considering that these are the experiences which have offered us the opportunity to learn how to better manage our health and life in the physical world. In fact, at times when the body is suffering, it is more difficult to deal with other things.

But, even if our “jewels” are useful resources to care for our health (we all have a clear understanding of the difficulty and suffering that our physical body can put us through, when it is not able to work properly), this should not be our only concern: often, we do not adequately consider the problems our *emotions* can cause us. Whereas the physical body knows how to get our attention through pain, annoying emotions are usually silenced: either we repress them or we attempt to numb ourselves against noticing them. There are even those who, in order to escape unbearable emotional tension, may cause themselves harm.

But do these techniques really help us to avoid feelings of fear, or sadness, or depression? And, as for our thoughts, where can distorted visions of reality lead us, if not to real pathologies?

***Diomedes pays the price for being right.***

*Diomedes was an excellent mining engineer, who worked in Canada for*

a European company. He earned a lot of money, and was almost the perfect project manager - "almost" because he had a weak point: his character; he was very impulsive and, when he grew angry, he lost control easily.

One day, his boss ordered him – in a somewhat peremptory manner – to stop the particular research task he was working on, which was taking up too much of his time. Diomedes tried to convince his boss, with increasing insistence, of the value of the research, until he was determined to make the man change his mind at all costs.

He was so convinced that he was right, it did not even occur to him that his boss may have more valid reasons than his own for the request. Nor did Diomedes realize that he was being disrespectful – and increasingly aggressive, as he was overcome by a strange emotional fury (a force).

Finally, his boss reacted vehemently to this, approaching him assertively, shouting and threatening to fire him. And Diomedes, now unable to restrain himself, made a totally unintentional gesture: he shoved his boss sharply.

In no time, he found himself back home, looking for any kind of occupation. He ended up doing generic, occasional and poorly-paid jobs, between asking his parents for help to survive.

Throughout his life, Diomedes had placed importance almost exclusively on his intelligence and his professional attitude - but he had not once taken control of the impetuous side of his character. This aspect alone had been enough to overshadow the others, and prevented him from continuing to occupy a prominent position which would have otherwise been entirely adequate for his working aspirations. In short, he had neglected his *non-rational* components once too often.

Where did this incompleteness manifest itself? In the material world (where he was apparently triumphant), or in the emotional world?

Or, perhaps the problem had even more facets than this. Did Diomedes, for example, take into consideration the fact that his boss might have been acting on his own orders, from above, and that maybe he was afraid to disregard them? This might explain his inflexibility.

Was Diomedes's limited realization of the reality of the situation material, emotional or mental in nature? We might also consider that, in addition to these three aspects, there is another important one: Diomedes had not *guessed* the situation correctly; he had shown a lack of *intuition*.

His mistake may not have ruined him. But, even if he worked hard and managed to successfully rebuild a material wellbeing, a degree of

intuition in the first place might have prevented him going through such a tough time.

Two useful lessons emerge for us from his story:

1. The part of us to which we give the most importance is the part which decides for us, even at the expense of the others.
2. Depending on how our inner forces balance, we end up living in one particular way or another.

#### 4. FEELING AT EASE IN OUR INNER WORLDS

Thanks to the last example, we can begin to notice that we live simultaneously in multiple “worlds”, characterized by different vibratory levels. And, as these worlds have a decisive influence on our wellbeing, it would be advisable to learn about them:

- The “*material world*” - in which we live through our body (and to which Diomedes sought to limit himself – at least until his dismissal);
- The “*emotional world*” - in which we live through our emotions (the unmanaged anger which caused Diomedes to be fired);
- The “*world of thoughts*” (in which Diomedes considered things from a single point of view: his own);
- The “*intuitive world*” - from where a bell might ring (Diomedes did not allow his intuition to tell him that his boss might have been having serious problems of his own).

But, if our only concern is to feel good in the material world, why should we be interested in other realities?

Well, we have seen that Diomedes faced heavy consequences for:

- Not having been able to manage his anger in the *emotional world*;
- Not having investigated the situation in the *world of thoughts*;
- Not having captured important aspects of the problem in the *intuitive world*.

These worlds are each connected to one another, and we attain wellbeing by knowing how to stay in touch with all of them; when everything happens harmoniously, we are usually fine.

To get closer to this result, we follow a path which, although not short, is a fascinating journey of continuous research and continuous discoveries. There is no point in our arrival, because we can always improve – so, it makes no sense to ask how long the journey will last.

Nor is there any need to change ourselves or to adhere to any model; it is more simply a matter of continuing to rediscover ourselves - like the child who does not stop crawling on all fours, until he discovers that he can walk, then run, then ride a bicycle, then finally move even in non-solid environments. What can help us on this journey is trying to foster a harmonious collaboration between the worlds in which we live. Thus, the child of which we have just spoken will be able to more easily receive

the following:

- From the *material world*, the muscles and strength to walk;
- From the *emotional world*, the enthusiasm and joy of moving;
- From the *world of thoughts*, help in choosing a path;
- From the *intuitive world*, a feeling that the chosen path may or may not be the right one, and the necessary warnings to proceed without problem.

What is therefore left for us to do? In every being, there is a natural impulse to evolve - we just need to learn to listen to it. From each of the worlds comes an invitation to research, to progress and to explore. We always tend to simply let ourselves go – to regress – when in fact listening to our deep sensations will reconnect us with the different worlds in which we live.

So, how do these worlds interact?



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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ugo Foscolo; *Of the Sepulchers*.

<sup>2</sup> For most people, this is a wave of the material world.

<sup>3</sup> No two things can occupy the same space.

<sup>4</sup> By “rational choices”, we mean those operated by a restrictive rationality which satisfies only our brains. We neglect other important factors, because we remain dangerously attracted to the apparent coherence of our reasoning.

<sup>5</sup> “*But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now, as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from Heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’*” Acts 9:1-5; KJV.

<sup>6</sup> “*Royal son of Laertes, Odysseus, master of exploits, hold back now! Call a halt to the great leveler, War.*” *The Odyssey, Book 24*; translated by Robert Fagles. <http://www.boyle.kyschools.us/UserFiles/88/The%20Odyssey.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> “*He obeyed her, glad at heart.*” *The Odyssey, book 24*; translated by Robert Fagles. <http://www.boyle.kyschools.us/UserFiles/88/The%20Odyssey.pdf>

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<sup>8</sup> Maxim attributed to Heraclitus, Greek philosopher; Ephesus, 535 BC–Ephesus, 475 BC.

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Know\\_thyself](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Know_thyself)

<sup>10</sup> “No debes ir un día, - sin cojerle un secreto, grande o breve - sea tu vida alerta - descubrimiento cotidiano.” Juan Ramón Jiménez; *Eternità: Pietra e Cielo*, edited by Francesco Tentori Montalto, Edizioni Accademia, Milan 1974, 78–79.

<sup>11</sup> Luis Pisoni, *L'esigenza di Sapere*, Formazione e Ricerca (Project Learning), 1997, 20-22. Also: <https://www.introspectivity.com/searching-within/>

<sup>12</sup> Gurdjieff and Ouspenski saw in us many ‘I’s; Stylianos Atteshlis (Daskalos) saw a series of ‘elementals’; Assagioli (Psychosynthesis) saw ‘sub-personalities’, etc.