

THE
EVOLUTION
OF THE SOUL
THROUGH SERVICE

Born to Serve

by Susan S. Trout, Ph.D.

WITH A FOREWORD BY HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

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Poem by Uvanuk from *The Enlightened Heart* by Stephen Mitchell.
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Personal stories in this book have been changed
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CHAPTER FOUR

The Shadow of Service

*A*fter many years as a recovering alcoholic and participant in two twelve-step programs, Lila agreed to be a twelve-step sponsor for Phyllis. Phyllis' substance abuse had left her homeless and out of work. Lila proceeded to help Phyllis in every way she could. She offered her room and board in her own home and supported her in finding a job by helping her select the proper clothes, typing her resume, and driving her to interviews. She accompanied Phyllis to twelve-step meetings and provided an immediate presence whenever Phyllis had a crisis. Lila felt fulfilled, and Phyllis began getting her life in order.

One day, about six months into their relationship, during a discussion of Phyllis' progress, Phyllis suddenly blew up at Lila, calling her "manipulative, controlling, and poisonous." Lila was devastated. Only after intense self-examination was she able to admit that her own need to be nurtured and affirmed motivated her service. By trying to "fix" Phyllis, she had projected her loneliness and her lack of self-love, self-appreciation, and self-worth onto her. As long as Phyllis accepted the projection, Lila felt fulfilled—her needs were met.

MEETING THE SHADOW OF SERVICE

When we meet and own our shadow of service, the pure light of the soul pours through us spontaneously and contains no self-reference, using intuition to dispel illusions. The convergence of our inner journey with our outer one leads to the discovery of the soul's unique destiny. Gradually, we move from being self-centered to being centered on humanity.

The shadow brings unfulfilled potentials to our awareness. As we claim our shadow, the psychic energy once held in the disowned parts of ourselves becomes available for our evolution, our creativity, and our service. Without fear and guilt, we can willingly examine our hidden motives for service, asking whether we are serving to satisfy our need for power, fame, affection, or validation. We witness our tendencies to make ourselves or others superior to the rest of humanity. We acknowledge the many ways our personality distorts the purity of our giving. Our willingness to meet our shadow allows us to consciously make another choice.

When someone is in distress, we serve by responding, with their permission, to relieve their suffering to the fullest extent possible and with a commitment for the highest good for all concerned. To use a common metaphor, this action "gives the hungry fish to eat." Then, as the story goes, we encourage self-responsibility by teaching them to fish. True Service adds one more step. True Service teaches people to understand how to create, maintain, and participate in a healthy environment in which both they and the fish can thrive as a part of nature as a whole. This additional step offers those we serve the gift of choice and with it the freedom of unlimited possibilities.

Being committed to our own growth means being committed to meeting our shadow. The reward of this commitment occurs

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when True Service begins to express through us. Then gratitude overwhelms us for the many learning opportunities provided by the shadow.

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THE SHADOW AND ITS MOTIVATION TO SERVE

The shadow holds the neglected, undeveloped, un-lived, negative, and destructive aspects of our psyches. It also contains shameful and unacceptable desires and emotions. The shadow operates like a veil over the soul, virtually overshadowing the energy of the higher truth of who we are and affecting the purity of the soul's expression. Until we learn to observe ourselves with detachment, we remain largely unaware of our inner motivations and the impact we have on others. Unconscious motivations, often accompanied by neglect of our own physical, mental, and spiritual health, contaminate our service. In the story of Lila and Phyllis, Phyllis sensed Lila's hidden motivations. The more Lila did for her, the more Phyllis felt imposed upon. She then projected her feelings of powerlessness onto Lila in rage.

According to Carl Jung, the shadow is the part of the psyche that resides in the personal unconscious. In literature, the shadow symbolizes the hidden past and the primitive and inferior parts of the self. We can think of the shadow as creating the blocks to the flow of the Life Force. As long as the shadow remains hidden, we live in the fetid swamp of blocked energy. As we take responsibility for the shadow, the Life Force flows from the spring of well-being.

Jungian analyst Robert Johnson sees the shadow as our psyche's attempt to hide the duality of both dark and light. Not only do we refuse our negative traits, we also may refuse our finer quali-

ties. Because the shadow contains potential for growth and nobility, Jung described it as 90 percent gold. Although it seems absurd, the shadow's gold often frightens us more than its darkness. We may even project our finer qualities outward, making other people into heroes or beings with qualities superior to and unattainable for ourselves. We thereby let others carry our personal potential for positive and constructive talents and qualities.

Johnson uses the symbol of a seesaw to describe the two sides of the personality. The visible and desirable characteristics sit on one side of the seesaw and the hidden, forbidden characteristics on the other. When we indulge the characteristics of either side, we subject the psyche to extreme stress. The stress causes us to lose our balance and flip into the opposite behavior. For example, Lila focused totally on being "the good person who sacrifices by helping others." Her shadow evidenced itself in the opposite behavior, her pride for her sacrifice. Lila displayed this by being sure everyone knew how helpless Phyllis would have been without her.

As we progress toward wholeness, we are challenged to balance the light and the dark by focusing our attention on the center of the seesaw. We experience balance by standing in the middle and honoring the truth of both sides. We no longer oppose our duality. Rather, we own our shadow and embrace the paradox of polarity. Instead of experiencing the tension of an either/or, all-or-none world, we experience a world beyond opposites.

"To transform opposition into paradox," says Johnson, "is to allow both sides of an issue, both pairs of opposites, to exist in equal dignity and worth. If I can stay with my conflicting impulses long enough, the two opposing forces will teach each other something and produce an insight that serves them both." Johnson uses the term "creative synthesis" to describe the shift in energy accompanying the balancing of light and dark. Creative synthesis

Creative synthesis occurs when our self-knowledge rises to the level of spiritual wisdom, beyond the polarities of psychological and physical realities.

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occurs when our self-knowledge rises to the level of spiritual wisdom, beyond the polarities of psychological and physical realities. We may experience such a synthesis as a transcendent moment, a spiritual insight, or a gift of grace. Frequently the experience manifests in a visible change in our personality natures. For example, when Lila accepted the motivations of her shadow and balanced them with her generosity, kindness, and willingness to serve, she noticeably changed. Once perceived as distant, she became gentle, humble, and open to her own and others' mistakes. Unless we take responsibility for the shadow, we burden others and lose the opportunity for creative synthesis.

The energy of the shadow is also visible in how we receive service. When we disown receiving and only give, we set up a polarity in the psyche that leads to a need to control both giving and receiving. Lila obviously defended herself against receiving anything from Phyllis. She confined her receiving to having her needs met through her giving. She denied Phyllis the joy of giving, confining her to a role that was thereby less than human. Only giving is like breathing out and never breathing in. This leads to burnout. Only receiving is like breathing in and holding one's breath. This leads to lifelessness. True Service is alive, vital, natural, and joyous. True Service breathes in, breathes out, and recognizes the sacred moment of silence between breaths.

The shadow presents a further paradox. Light cannot exist without darkness; therefore, the more light-filled our conscious personality becomes, the more shadow we have. Johnson writes that "to make light is to make shadow; one cannot exist without the other." As a result, the more enlightened we are, the more vigilant we must be of our shadow side.

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and beliefs toward those we serve and toward ourselves as servers. Our motivation to serve impacts those we serve and those who serve us. A potential exists for both harm and good. A nurse tells this story:

I was working the evening shift in the hospital; we were very busy. An old Native American man kept ringing his bell. His legs ached and he wanted a massage. I told him repeatedly that I was busy, that there were emergencies. He persisted until I went to massage his legs.

I was a little angry with him for not understanding the stress of my job. I said to myself, "I'll pretend I'm massaging Christ's legs; I'll make it an act of service." So I began to massage his legs. He lay still, not grateful, but openly receptive. He knew he fully deserved my attention. Slowly, powerfully, an immense sense of love, renewal, and vitality flowed through every cell of my body. I realized I *was* massaging the legs of Christ.

This dear grandfather had called me into his room to give me this gift of divine awareness. And I had thought he wanted something from me.

The level at which the grandfather received and gave back and his total acceptance transformed the nurse's anger and resistance. The value and integrity of our work depend upon the quality of our intent and our willingness to shift from a closed to an open heart.

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forth like the thrust of a wave carried along by the power of hidden undercurrents. These undercurrents, operating as projection, denial, or neglect, represent unconscious shadow challenges to the quality of our inner lives and therefore to the quality of our service. Most of us contaminate our service in each of these ways some of the time. The degree to which we do so depends on our level of awareness.

Coming to terms with the shadow is the work of the soul's evolution. Self-growth and serving others are inseparable and complementary human activities. We integrate and ground the learning of our personal inner healing work by applying it in service in our daily lives. In turn, our service reinforces our self-knowledge and strengthens our inner healing. Like an infinity sign, the energy of giving continually flows into the energy of receiving and back again.

THE SHADOW PROJECTED

Service can be a projection of our fear or guilt rather than an act of true compassion. We might give up our seat on the bus out of fear of violence or perform some service at work because we fear losing our job. Awareness of our own advantages might motivate us to serve those we perceive as unfortunate so that we can assuage our feelings of guilt and worthlessness.

Mark, a corporate executive who admits to many personal insecurities about his value and competence, helps regularly in the kitchen at a homeless shelter. He explains, "I feel so guilty that I have so much and they have so little. Who am I to have so many work opportunities and a comfortable life? I feel better when I help these poor people." Mark's service is an attempt to satisfy his need to be innocent and guilt-free.

Projection is the process by which we impose our shadow on someone or something outside ourselves. Through projection, we give away those qualities, positive and negative, that we do not want to accept in ourselves. When we project, we impose our will on someone or something else by imposing our beliefs and ideas. By imposing our will, we disempower the recipient while serving our own needs. Rather than giving, we take.

One day I received a call from a woman frantic with concern for a friend with AIDS. "He won't listen to me!" she complained. "There are so many things he could do to get well and he won't do them. How can his friends help him when he won't let himself be helped?"

The woman thought she was being helpful and supportive by showering her friend with tapes, books, and a myriad of holistic health alternatives. She was desperate for her friend to accept the approach she herself would use if she had a life-threatening illness. In her own life, she was not practicing the preventative aspects of the approach to health that she herself supported. As a result, she projected her need to be self-responsible onto her friend. She was giving the wrong thing in the wrong amount at the wrong time and for the wrong reason.

We know we have accepted a projection by our emotional response to what is happening. The person to whom we throw a projection only catches it if the projected image matches an image the recipient holds in his or her own shadow. For example, when Lila projected onto Phyllis a belief in Phyllis' powerlessness, Phyllis reacted because she also believed she was powerless. If she had felt centered in her inner power, she would not have needed to react in self-defense and might not even have noticed Lila's projection. Whenever we feel ourselves throw or catch a projection, we have shadow issues to address.

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Shadow tendencies of individuals blend together to form a group or collective shadow. Service groups and organizations have different styles for exhibiting their collective shadow energy depending upon the nature of their shadow tendencies. For example, if several persons in a group feel powerless because they have disowned their self-worth, they may collectively project their authority issues onto the leader. As a group, they may challenge the leader's role and knowledge. The group may, instead, disown their potential for leadership and project the total burden of responsibility for the organization onto the leader. In the latter instance, the group is then likely to view the leader as superior, flawless, and unreachable. At the same time the group is disowning its leadership potential, the leader may be projecting his or her fears about leadership onto the group through excessive control or need for positive feedback. The collective shadow of members of a group always overlaps the leader's shadow.

As a nation, one way we project our collective shadow onto service is through reductionism, reducing an integrated system to fragmented parts. The universe is composed of interactive and interconnected systems: solar systems, ecosystems, governments, businesses, families, bodies, and so forth. Nothing exists in isolation; each system affects other systems and each part of a system affects the whole and *vice versa*. A reductionistic view fails to recognize the systemic nature of things and results in categorization and dualistic thinking. When we disown our wholeness, we see a fragmented world. When we disown a part of ourselves, we project that part outward. One reason we project our fragmented reality onto the world is to reduce things to manageable pieces. We think, "Now I am doing service, now I am not," or, "That is service, this is not." Reductionistic thinking pervades the helping professions as well as the fields of business, education, and industry. It is highly evi-

dent in the field of medicine where physicians specialize in diagnosing and treating parts of the body rather than the body as a whole system.

POWER AND FAME

Service can become a field for harvesting power and fame. The seeds of ambition, hidden and dormant in the server, can find fertile ground in acts of helping. Whether as a leader of a service organization or a volunteer, a helpful neighbor, or an in-charge secretary, one can use service as a way to feel personally powerful and to receive rewards and recognition. An attitude of “I am important because I can give something special that people need and do not have” expresses a desire for power and fame. Sustaining this attitude over time leads eventually to misalignment of the head and heart. Intellect and knowledge become separated from wisdom and compassion. The use of the skillful will to develop skill and competency becomes disconnected from the use of the good will for serving the good of humanity. Like the characters in Douglass Wallop’s *Damn Yankees*, we can sell our souls for power and fame.

Service provides a stage to act out apparent power in order to receive outside validation of personal significance. True power is inner strength. We discover our inner strength when we are tolerant of our weaknesses, not when we avoid them. By patiently addressing the feelings arising from loss of a job, illness, depression, or death of a loved one, we strengthen ourselves. Power pours in when we persevere with the inner healing process and honor our expanding self-knowledge and growth. True power comes from an open heart.

When we disown our true power by projecting it and believing it lies outside ourselves, we repress the Life Force and feel

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powerless and insecure. With our true power hidden, we rely on creating apparent power, the illusion of power, in a desperate attempt to regain wholeness and to survive physically or psychologically. Out of insecurity, we act strong, confident, and in control, when inwardly we feel powerless and therefore victimized. As a result, we polarize the world into victims and victimizers and project this belief onto those we serve. To be saviors, we must see others as helpless and in need of saving.

Heather shared that her parents received numerous awards for their contributions and leadership of many charitable organizations, community projects, and boards. The community considered them leaders of innovative change. By contrast, at home they were both active alcoholics who expressed their insecurities and lack of true power by unleashing their inner torment on their five children through psychological and physical abuse.

Heather's parents failed to recognize the shadow side of their psyches and failed to integrate their physical, social, and emotional selves. They unconsciously believed in their own powerlessness, manifesting this belief in their alcoholism, abusiveness, and in their conspiracy to hide their behaviors. They disowned their true power and expressed apparent power as altruistic and responsible citizens.

As illustrated in this story, the potential for misuse of power lies within each person rather than within a role or setting. The misuse of power may appear in any relationship in which one person is perceived to have more power than another.

Motivations of power or fame also make us vulnerable to projecting our hidden fears and desires about the body. Stories abound of counselors who sexually misuse patients, physicians who sell and use drugs, and religious leaders who extort funds to engage in lavish life-styles. Anyone serving in a position of trust and au-

thority is susceptible to using intellectual or spiritual knowledge to manipulate others in order to satisfy desire for power and fame. Those who do this must psychically deny or split off their physical natures, for example, by denying sexual passion, aging, and infirmity. A polarized view of the body as either flesh or spirit, sinful or innocent, animal or godlike, selfish or altruistic, characterizes this split. The disowned polarity gathers an all-consuming energy and strives to balance itself in extreme ways. A disowned body results in guilt and shame about bodily functions and leads to addictive and abusive behaviors. These may include substance abuse, eating disorders, gambling, sexual addiction, physical and sexual abuse, inappropriate sexual behavior, and financial excess and irresponsibility.

PRIDE

Whether pride manifests covertly or overtly, the desire for recognition as “the one most responsible for the good that happens in the lives of others” motivates the prideful server. Such a server desires approval and recognition in the form of awards and special favors. When motivated by pride, we want others to believe that we are more giving than most and that what we give is uniquely valuable and important. Unless we receive sufficient appreciation for ourselves or our cause, we lose interest in giving and move on to where we feel our worth will be acknowledged.

We can most easily identify pride when it manifests overtly as a sales pitch for the “right way.” Pride motivates individuals and groups who believe their approach is the only approach. They strive to “sell” their “product” because they believe they know what people need and that their services are both superior and indispensable.

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wrong usually accompany overt pride. Covert pride is an even more insidious and pervasive means of projection. Under the guise of humility and love, covert pride manifests as false humility, martyrdom, and competition.

False humility is another aspect of pride in which a desire for praise and recognition manifests as denial of that desire and as disparagement of our gifts and talents. When we engage in false humility we discount and negate the value of our giving. We are inauthentic, saying the opposite of what we believe and want. Anyone working with or being served by us senses our inauthenticity and feels patronized. False humility tends to evoke guilt in others, and guilt is a powerful tool for manipulation and victimization.

Because pride arises from a need to feel superior, a prideful server necessarily victimizes those served to some degree. Whenever we victimize someone else, we do so because of our own feelings of being a victim. As a result, from false humility it is a short step to martyrdom. Martyrs give to get. As martyrs, when we do not get what we want, we feel victimized by the persons to whom we have given and want to punish them. Our self-pity takes the form of “poor me.” We call attention to our own helpfulness and to the lack of appreciation expressed by those we have helped. Then, to perpetuate the cycle, we continue to offer help to the same people who, in turn, feel guilty, betrayed, emotionally manipulated, and abused.

Pride can cause us to engage in comparison in order to assure ourselves of our own worth and ability. Comparison leads to competition and jealousy, behaviors based on a belief that love, recognition, success, and talent are scarce commodities that we lack. We compete for this limited supply by making others wrong, sometimes to the point of violating personal and professional standards.

Unhealthy competition especially evidences as a shadow issue in the world of political and social activism. Many activists enjoy conflict for the sake of fighting a good fight. In the joy of the fray, they often fixate on a point of view, expect blind loyalty, and are callous about the consequences of their actions. Fueled with the energy of rage and the importance and validity of the cause, activists compete aggressively against those with opposing views. If pride takes over, activists may fall in love with, and even obsess on, an issue. The many things to fight for, participate in, and save can dominate their lives. They may also focus on keeping alive the memories of wrongdoing. The urgency and emotion of causes are usually associated with adolescence when individuals are particularly prone to polarized views of the world. Activists of any age can use a cause as a focus of their rage about a personal hurt and to avoid inner work.

Competitive pride also causes comparison of the relative importance of forms of service. People commonly view service to the dying, the disabled, the homeless, or those in crisis or disaster situations as more important than mowing a neighbor's lawn or opening a door for someone. Following the 1995 federal building bombing in Oklahoma City, a resident observed people competing for certain roles. They considered leading crisis support groups or organizing memorials as more prestigious and valuable than listening to another's experience or taking someone's child to school. The prideful categorization of roles, especially in a time of great tragedy, reinforces feelings of victimization and helplessness among those served.

When out of pride we communicate an air of superiority by conveying that we have our lives together when we do not, those being served feel patronized, belittled, and betrayed. It is natural for those receiving service to question the humanity of those who

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serve them.

Irene noted that Caucasians often came to the reservation where she worked because they wanted to “help the Indians.” The Native Americans frequently blocked the efforts of these people both overtly and covertly. Many individuals told Irene that they did not understand why white people could not leave them alone to take care of themselves, even if they did it poorly. Inwardly they seemed to ask, “Who are these people, what are they doing here, and why do they keep returning?”

Trustworthy servers are authentic and whole human beings who share their confusions and mistakes, joys and accomplishments. We live in a world of shared humanity with multiple opportunities to learn and grow. When we share our whole selves, we share authentically. We communicate our genuineness and do not pretend we are something we are not.

When we feel unappreciated or self-righteous, we have an opportunity to explore our true motives for serving. We use that opportunity to ask ourselves if we are giving to get or giving to share our genuine care for others. We explore the feeling of defeat that arises when a victory is not rewarded or an idealistic dream is not realized. Pride in giving closes the heart and separates the giver from those served.

SENTIMENT

When we serve from sentiment, we use feelings and emotions as the basis for our thoughts, opinions, judgements, attitudes, and actions. We view the world and our interactions with others through the lens of emotion. Our emotions color our perceptions and decisions. Intense feelings, inspired by beauty, love, sorrow, and pain and expressed with deep passion, can frighten others. As a result, we may learn to hold back the feelings some of the

time, usually at the risk of having them erupt with even greater force at another time.

Sentiment focuses on relationships, love, and loss. It arises from experiences of great suffering and results in a need to feel special. When motivated by sentiment, we often assume that others experience the same intense suffering and emotion as we do. As a result, we seek validation of our emotions from those we serve or serve with, exploiting them to meet our emotional needs.

When we are out of touch with the True Self, our emotional boundaries lack clarity. We take on others' moods and are empathic to their pain. We may be too sensitive to criticism, hurt at the tiniest slight, and feel that something is wrong or missing in our lives. We serve the world of effects. The pain and suffering of others remind us of our own; we strive to eliminate our personal distress and discomfort by relieving theirs and taking on their responsibilities. By focusing on alleviating others' suffering, we risk preventing them from learning lessons necessary for the evolution of their souls.

I once observed a good example of the importance of allowing others to take responsibility for their own situations rather than reacting from sentiment. The city bus I was riding stopped to pick up a woman on crutches. Almost instantaneously, several people at the front of the bus jumped up to help her climb the steps. Immediately she cried out, "Leave me alone! I want to get on this bus *myself!*" The helpers sat down meekly, and we all waited while she ascended the steps and took her seat.

Personally overwhelmed by this woman's struggles, the willing helpers unconsciously thought, "I would hate to be disabled and dependent." They then projected their fear onto her and jumped to help. They assumed they were being empathic, but true empathy demands that we *know* what the other person feels

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before we determine that we can share the feeling. Obviously this woman did not see herself as helpless and knew that people served her best by being empathic to her inner strength and physical independence.

By overlooking the fact that those we serve have different needs and concerns than ourselves, we also deny our own needs. To validate our perceived perception of their needs, we deny ourselves in order to please and meet their personality demands. For example, out of sentiment, the parents of a child with severe disabilities might exhaust themselves doing everything for the child rather than pushing the child to explore her own potential, however limited.

ATTACHMENT

There are four primary ways that attachment affects the quality of service. Three of these are: attachment to the form of service, to the outcome of service, and/or to the people served. In the fourth, we encourage those we serve to be attached to us. Attachment arises from the belief that something outside ourselves is essential to our physical, emotional, or mental well-being. Attachment causes us to grasp and hang on to a relationship, concept, or material possession in the belief that our life depends on its presence. Pride taints our attachments when we engage in competition and comparison related to the superior value of what we do, the results we obtain, whom we serve, and how needed we are. Such an attitude is arrogant and proud and arises from a heart closed to opportunities to learn compassion. Attachment destroys the spirit of life by reinforcing the illusion that we are separate from one another rather than part of an interdependent system.

ATTACHMENT TO FORM

When attached to a form of service, we seek validation of our self-worth from the roles and activities through which we serve. Our motivation to serve is conditional, dependent on how our service is perceived by others and how much it enhances our self-image.

A materialistic society such as ours is a manifestation of attachment to form. We are not simply attached to people, objects, or money; we are attached to the form of what we call success and what we call service. These attachments reflect a belief that service is a separate activity rather than a natural and integrated part of our lives individually and communally.

I once met a man who insisted that he did not participate in service. Yet when I asked him if he was a father, he said yes. He admitted that he had never thought of fatherhood as service; he thought service only meant helping the unfortunate. Even when we view parenting as service, however, we can be attached to the form of our role. One father may become attached to serving his children as a provider and playmate and avoid the roles of teacher, disciplinarian, and nurturer. Another may do just the opposite.

Nonattachment is a precept of the monastic traditions of most religions, but some people in secular occupations have also demonstrated it. Our true heroes are those who in their lifetimes inspire others through their selfless service. Abi 'l-Khayr wrote, "The true saint goes in and out amongst the people and eats and sleeps with them and buys and sells in the market and marries and takes part in social intercourse, and never forgets God for a single moment." A few well-known people who have lived their life in this way are the Carmelite Brother Lawrence, the Sufi poet Rumi, the English nurse Florence Nightingale, the German physician

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Albert Schweitzer, the Native American elder Twylah Nitsch, and the Swedish statesman Dag Hammarskjöld.

ATTACHMENT TO OUTCOME

Sometimes the outcome we seek is a specific response from those we serve.

Attached to outcome, we believe our well-being is dependent on the product of our service. We measure our success by whether or not we achieved a specific product. For example, if an environmentalist is attached to the outcome of her campaign to stop the clear-cutting of forests, she may feel she has personally failed if her campaign is unsuccessful.

Attachment to outcome invariably leads to burnout, a state of physical and mental exhaustion. When we continually expend our energies in pursuit of a specific end result, we deny ourselves the joy and replenishment that comes from participating fully in the process. We may rush past potentially meaningful relationships, ignore opportunities, and even hurt our cause by being totally outcome focused. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, “Whatever we say or think, this is arduous duty, doing this kind of work: to live out one’s idealism brings with it hazards.”

Sometimes the outcome we seek is a specific response from those we serve. When Carol offered to tutor seven-year-old Kelly, she expected to make a dramatic difference in Kelly’s life and to receive his eternal gratitude. Kelly resisted being tutored by being inattentive and sometimes belligerent. Carol persisted in trying to break through his resistance, but nothing changed. After each session, she felt so exhausted she considered resigning. Finally, in desperation, Carol quit resisting Kelly’s resistance and adjusted her expectations to match his emotional needs. Kelly became cooperative, and Carol felt energized and inspired by the sessions.

At other times, the outcome we seek is the physical and emo-

tional exultation that results from certain kinds of achievements. Research indicates that helping others actually increases endorphin levels, creating a natural “high,” lowering stress, and enhancing feelings of well-being. While this “high” reinforces a positive behavior, its shadow side is that one can become emotionally and physiologically addicted to the experience. An addiction is the attachment to the outcome of a given behavior. Meeting the needs of the addiction takes precedence over the needs of anyone or anything else. Addiction to a physical high easily becomes linked with other things perceived as positive outcomes of service, such as respect, praise, and the validation of the value of one’s work.

One woman whose work earned her a place on the lecture and conference circuit shared that during and after presentations she felt energized and totally alive. She loved sharing her life’s work with eager listeners and felt that her contribution really counted. She felt that she was finally being rewarded for her years of hard, and sometimes lonely, work. While life on the circuit was glamorous and rewarding, life between presentations began to feel dull and unfulfilling. As a result, she accepted more and more invitations. Her children complained of her absences, her husband felt burdened and used, and she could not maintain the quality of the very work that had merited the speaking engagements. Soon she became physically ill and emotionally exhausted. She then realized she had become addicted to attention and praise to the point that she had been willing to give up everything else in her life. Similarly, people who regularly volunteer in emergency and disaster situations may be attached to the exhilaration of being heroes in times of need.

An addiction is the attachment to the outcome of a given behavior.

ATTACHMENT TO THOSE WE SERVE

When we are attached to those we serve, we cross physical

Once we disentangle ourselves from feelings and responsibilities that do not belong to us, we can allow others to be accountable for their own choices.

and emotional boundaries. We risk assuming responsibility for the feelings and experiences of others, and we risk becoming addicted to our service. We can become attached to those we serve in marriage, family, personal, work, and professional or social settings.

In his book *Boundaries and Relationships*, psychiatrist Charles Whitfield explains that taking on another's responsibility is an attempt to gain acceptance and love. This tendency, the result of poorly defined boundaries, can lead to attempts to change, rescue, or fix others. Whitfield writes that as we become aware of our True Self, we are able to discern "what is mine and what is not mine." We learn to tell the difference between our own needs, feelings, and projections and those of others. This clarity about ourselves enables us to make choices harmonious with the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of our True Self. Once we disentangle ourselves from feelings and responsibilities that do not belong to us, we can allow others to be accountable for their own choices.

Attachment issues are common in intimate relationships, such as in marriage and other partnerships. After several years of marriage, Mary puzzled over her extreme attachment to being responsible for her husband Dan's thoughts and behavior. It was as though she herself thought his shadow thoughts and performed his irresponsible acts. Mary readily acknowledged that her greatest fear in her marriage was that Dan would betray and therefore abandon her, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Her fear of abandonment caused her to distrust Dan. She exhibited this by continually criticizing and correcting him. She desperately wanted him to change. After doing extensive inner work, Mary observed that her fear of abandonment had prevented her from identifying and claiming her feelings, beliefs, dreams, and preferences. She saw that she was the abandoner by having abandoned her True Self.

As a result of her insight, a healing occurred in the marriage, and Mary began allowing Dan to be responsible for his own choices and behavior. In time, Mary recognized that her marriage relationship could be one in which each party supported and served the other.

As members of families, we exhibit attachment issues anytime we attempt to help a situation by taking on the responsibility of another member's feelings and behavior. By assuming this responsibility, we hope the person will change his or her behavior and the problem will disappear. This is usually part of a long established pattern of victim and rescuer. When we rescue the victim, we can claim to be a good parent, child, or sibling. This in turn assuages any guilt we hold about these relationships. On the other hand, rescuer and victim may both be attached to the problem and not want it solved. We can define ourselves by the role we play in a problem to such an extent that we may unconsciously fear that solving the problem may threaten our very existence. We are attached to the *status quo* and fear the results of change.

Whether within the family or within society, whenever we rely on a person, group of people, or a cause as the source and supply of our life energy, we exhibit attachment to those we serve. In such cases we act on the belief that the presence of someone or something outside ourselves, like a cause or a role, is what gives life meaning and purpose. Attached to the sense of well-being we receive from those we serve or from a cause we espouse, we lose sight of the True Self as the only source of well-being. We contract around the Life Force. We give in order to take by using those we serve to replenish our energy. As a result, we become physically and mentally exhausted, and those we serve feel drained in our presence. The addiction to serving in this way is self-perpetuating because attachment precludes awareness of other possibilities.

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*ENCOURAGING THOSE WE SERVE
TO ATTACH TO US*

When we encourage others to meet their needs through us, we fail to support healthy boundaries and the True Self in them and in ourselves.

Ill-defined boundaries or an intense desire for power and fame may cause us to encourage those we serve to depend on our strength rather than their own. Out of our need to be loved and valued, we encourage those we help to depend on us for their physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual well-being. This is the mechanism underlying co-dependency by which one becomes an enabler. Those in the helping professions who serve in the hope of being rescued from emotional pain and members of co-dependent family systems are especially prone to this form of attachment. There is a reciprocal relationship between the presence of healthy boundaries and a sense of the True Self. One must have healthy boundaries and a sense of the True Self in order to support the same in others. When we encourage others to meet their needs through us, we fail to support healthy boundaries and the True Self in them and in ourselves. This action disempowers those we serve, whether they are family members, coworkers, or clients.

Sometimes, even without our encouragement, those we help can attach themselves to us. They do so out of a desire to possess and absorb our energy or out of an inability or unwillingness to accept responsibility for themselves. Individuals who feel like victims or martyrs and have difficulty receiving are especially prone to becoming attached to their helpers. Because they are unconscious of their connection to the True Self, such individuals have an insatiable need to fill their gaping wounds with the energy of others. At the same time they try to pull love from others, they push it away. Caught in this cycle of self-imposed victimization, they take and take and take and do not receive. For them, giving is a sacrifice, and they seek sacrifice from those who serve them. As a result, serving such people requires strong boundaries and

total reliance on the True Self, rather than the personal self, as the source of energy.

THE SHADOW DENIED

Denial and projection are related and interdependent mechanisms. Power or fame, pride, sentiment, or attachment motivate the projected shadow. The denied shadow motivates us to evade service and disregard our need for competence.

Denial is an ego defense mechanism that suppresses unclaimed and undeveloped parts of ourselves, burying them in the unconscious. Each thing denied has a unique energetic configuration. The matching configuration of another event releases it from the unconscious. The release takes the form of a strong emotional reaction. Unless we understand the mechanism of denial and are willing to examine what is happening, we will project our denied fears and attributes onto our own bodies or onto others. For example, if one denies the part of oneself that neglects one's physical health, one may project irresponsibility onto physicians. One may project the fear of losing control of one's mental health by rejecting help offered by others. As a member of a group, one may claim that the group is emotionally unsafe when it is only oneself who feels this way. Still another example occurs when one claims others talk incessantly and never listen when that trait is one's own.

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EVASION

Evasion works in two ways: evasion of the natural urge to serve or the use of service to evade shadow issues. We evade our natural urge to serve primarily through inertia, a lack of initiative and energy, and a loss of interest and enthusiasm. Inertia is common among those who are self-pre-occupied and/or emotionally

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depressed. We can preoccupy ourselves with our own development and limitations by wanting special treatment from God and others. Persistent self-preoccupation results in an implosion of energy and blockage of the Life Force. When stuck in inertia, we use our energy to deliberate over possible changes rather than to gather the inner resources to make them. We may ultimately lapse into depression, becoming totally self-occupied and paralyzed by fear and guilt. Although when trapped by inertia, extending a helping hand seems impossible, such movement often releases the paralysis.

Groups and organizations can also become self-occupied and evade service through inertia. Self-centered groups focus on their immediate survival at the exclusion of the needs of society. The group's energy does not move outside itself. Eventually, the energy of the group implodes, leading to loss of enthusiasm and participation. Such a group often denies its shadow, proclaiming the group to be uniquely harmonious. Self-absorption hides unidentified and unspoken conflict of interests among group members. The consequences of failing to have an outer focus stay submerged until some form of conflict erupts. The group will disband if members do not address their individual and collective shadow issues.

As an example, the Institute for the Advancement of Service has two tenets: the participation in one's own healing process by choosing to see differently and the willingness to extend or share unconditionally that healing through service. Experience has taught us that we must vigilantly monitor the balance between these two tenets, between the inner and the outer directed aspects of the organization. If the organization becomes too self-focused, too oriented toward its own members' emotional needs, processes, and pain, its outer growth and quality of service to the community falters. The organization also falters if too much

energy is extended outward so that the members feel unsupported and alone. In either instance, rebalancing requires examination of the discrepancy between the organization's stated purpose and the current reality. This entails examination of the collective shadow.

Inertia also appears in service in other circumstances. Service requires commitment and concentrated focus, and we may choose not to develop or use our will to sustain the effort. Service challenges us to learn and grow, and we may choose to withdraw or to ignore or deny the lessons. Inertia may encourage us to engage in "cosmetic service," service that makes us look good while being undemanding and unchallenging. Cosmetic service may take the form of giving only financially or serving on a committee that rarely meets.

American culture supports the evasion of direct service with tax laws that encourage end-of-year charitable donations. Although the donations certainly benefit the recipients, the giver can lose the inner benefits of true charity unless the motivation is deeper than financial self-service. Charitable organizations themselves encourage contributors to feel they should receive something tangible for their donation by offering premiums or public recognition. Some send unsolicited gifts to prospective donors, knowing that many people feel compelled to donate if they have received something.

The Life Force moves where its flow is unobstructed. In *The Path of Least Resistance*, Robert Fritz explains that we can create what we truly want by aligning how we live our lives with where we want to go in our lives. By creating this alignment, we use the path of least resistance to our advantage, and it takes us where we want to go.

Like workaholics, our very busyness allows us to avoid intimate relationships and self-inquiry. Because we are serving oth-

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ers, however, we feel superior to those who overwork in less worthy occupations. We sacrifice the quality of our lives and our personal well-being, feeling our contribution is worth our suffering. We deny that we would rather suffer than face the realities of our mental state.

No matter how we use evasion in relation to service, the underlying motivations relate to denial of unrealized potential. We may disown our value and personal power, giving it to others to express. We may displace our fear and guilt about our perceived inadequacies by seeing ourselves as victims justified in self-preoccupation or by trying to prove our worth through over giving. Disowning our talents and capabilities reinforces both inertia and feelings of worthlessness.

INCOMPETENCE

Incompetence in service occurs when the heart and the head are misaligned. This occurs in one of two ways: the heart is open and the necessary skills are lacking, or the appropriate skills are present and the heart is closed. In his work on psychosynthesis, Roberto Assagioli defines this misalignment as an imbalance between love and will. To be competent servers, we need to acquire appropriate skills and to uphold professional or ethical standards.

For example, in reviewing its services, a nonprofit organization, which builds houses for low income families, discovered that the majority of its volunteers had an attitude of loving service but lacked construction skills. In construction, caring and compassion cannot substitute for the skills of carpenter, electrician, plumber, roofer, and painter. The organization had to find remedies for the volunteers' lack of skills. By contrast, a qualified and creative high school teacher volunteered to coordinate the Sunday School program at a church. Her lack of compassion for small

children and for volunteer teachers who needed support negated her many creative skills and caused interpersonal conflicts.

We are self-responsible when we serve at the level of our ability and are aware of the balance between our skills and our compassion. In our desire to help, we may tend to take on tasks and responsibilities for which we are ill-prepared. Such well-intentioned, but misdirected, service can have potentially harmful consequences for ourselves and for those we serve. This form of incompetence occurs in all professions.

People in crisis are the most vulnerable to incompetent servers. The crisis tends to diminish discrimination and self-trust of their intuition. Especially in these situations, service providers are responsible for monitoring their own competence and, if necessary, referring the person elsewhere.

Healers and those in the helping professions are responsible for monitoring the effect of their intervention on the energy fields of their clients. Fragmentation of a person's energy field may occur if the helper moves the energy too quickly or in the wrong way. Competence in this area requires training in understanding the dynamics of the human psyche and in identifying the conditions necessary for its integration.

When we are not aware of the true needs of those we serve, we tend to assume that we know what would be helpful for the person. We negate the individuality of those we serve by imposing our value system or personal experiences. As individuals, we differ in rate and stage of evolution, personality integration, life tasks, and personal history. It is therefore important to spend time and effort understanding someone before deciding how to help. This decision involves an intuitive awareness that what people believe they need can often be quite different from what best serves their welfare and spiritual progress.

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Incompetence is a form of denial to which people who engage in prideful competition or who serve out of sentiment are especially susceptible. When I first met Jack, he was working with the dying as a way of healing his own fears about death. His aura of fear impacted those he served, and he enhanced, rather than dissipated, his fear of death.

While in some cases our shadow energy may push us to do more than we are able, in other cases we might deny our true competence and resist doing all we can. If this is true, we need to examine our motives for continuing to serve in limited ways. When we do not successfully express our creativity, we risk projecting our unfulfilled potential onto others. We see ourselves as victims and believe the outer world is preventing us from expressing our talents. When we do not express our creativity or do not apply what we have learned, we risk dissipating our energy and undermining our psychological well-being. Our life circumstances—prejudice, political or economic suppression, or financial, family, or other stresses—may also thwart our expression of competence. The emergence of technology has also impacted how we express our competence and creativity.

The story of composer Felix Mendelssohn's sister, Fanny, illustrates the inhibition of creativity, the projection of unfulfilled potential, and finally the resolution of the conflict. Fanny Mendelssohn's musical talents were equal to those of her renowned brother. Because the standards of the day limited women's options, Fanny received little support for developing her creativity and expressing it publicly. Her biographer, Françoise Tillard, describes how Fanny withdrew into her brother's shadow and projected onto him "all her own hopes for the destiny that was denied her....Henceforth Felix lived the life she had no right to live." Fanny's projections of her unfulfilled potential often took the form

of anger and depression. She eventually discovered, however, that she could express her creativity through private concerts. Sharing her musical gifts with others enhanced her sense of personal value and emotional well-being.

The organizations we serve as employees or volunteers have the same responsibilities as individuals for ensuring competence. Each organization is responsible for assessing its strengths and weaknesses, acquiring new skills, and properly preparing and training its members. A supportive environment encourages the individual to explore and expand talents and creativity. Such opportunities allow mastery of personal struggles and the growth of skills and wisdom. From such mastery and growth we can genuinely share with others. The organizations benefit from the joy, creativity, and ever-expanding skills of their workers. As English social reformer John Ruskin said, "When love and skill work together, expect a masterpiece." Unfortunately, some organizations offer such limited choices that those with both skill and compassion cannot give at their level of competence or explore their creativity.

Today we live in a technologically based, world economy with a service, rather than a manufacturing, orientation. As businesses expand and technology encroaches on human involvement, organizations increasingly recognize that the personal engagement of the worker is the basis for the quality of both product and service. The ultimate product of all organizations and businesses is service, and service to customers is dependent on creating positive relationships both within and without the organization. New constructs of organizational design are revolutionizing attitudes, communication, teamwork, and relationships in the workplace. Some constructs, like Peter Senge's learning organization design, take into account the importance of individual and organizational self-inquiry, applying the knowledge of the individual's personal

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growth process to the organization.

The advances in organizational design have given rise to a new profession: organizational consultants. These consultants offer the service of helping organizations apply the new constructs. Such a business group, curious about our organization, visited the Institute. I asked them how their own organization applied the concepts of team building and shared vision. Several responded that although they taught others how to do it, their organization did not apply the knowledge. As a result, their own organization experienced discord and dissatisfaction. They, like many other consultants and experts, fail to see that competence depends on combining factual knowledge with application and experience.

With groups, as with individuals, there is a discrepancy between what is known to be effective and how the group or individual actually operates. The remedy for this discrepancy originates from the inside out. We acquire competence as we are willing to learn from experience and to integrate factual knowledge with application.

Groups with differing yet compatible missions often do not know how to be supportive in their communications. The busyness of each group combined with fear of survival often interferes with developing ways to cooperate rather than compete. One group can project its shadow onto that of another, resulting in miscommunication and conflict. As one example, a group can project incompetence onto another group and avoid looking at their own hidden limitations and inadequacies. In another example, a group may use pride to assure themselves that their purpose is more important to humanity than that of another group.

The family, one form of group, exhibits many incompetencies. Families typically neglect acquiring knowledge about parenting skills, sibling relationships, child development, and com-

munication skills. Through generations, families perpetuate patterns of behavior that limit potentials and distort lives, not only within the family, but within other groups of which family members are a part. Organizations can easily become extensions of the dysfunction in their members' families.

There are two additional considerations regarding competence of servers. In certain situations, especially in times of crisis, we may need to serve in a way that goes beyond our competence. In such instances, we should not hesitate to serve in the best way we can. Second, excessive self-consciousness about our competence is detrimental. Self-consciousness leads to loss of spontaneity and obstructed intuition. We need to balance the awareness of self with the awareness of the other.

THE SHADOW NEGLECTED

Consistent attention to one's own physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being is probably the greatest challenge for those who serve. Neglect occurs when we refuse to take responsibility for our projections and denials under the guise of focusing attention on the unending task of easing humanity's suffering. By focusing only on the needs of others, we sacrifice our own well-being and remain in the world of the suffering.

Some years ago, whenever I visited my spiritual teacher, she would ask, "And how are *you* doing, Susan?" At first, I responded with an automatic "fine." Later, when I contemplated her question, I had to admit I was neglecting my personal well-being.

A conflict between caring for others and caring for oneself reflects a belief in duality manifested in either/or thinking. We believe we must either give to others and neglect caring for ourselves or care for ourselves and neglect others. Underlying this

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dualistic approach may be the belief that we do not deserve to take care of ourselves or that selflessness means doing what others ask or expect of us. As a result, we fail to develop the discipline of caring for ourselves, independent of others' expectations.

Our service is enthusiastic and easy when we are physically comfortable, emotionally calm, and mentally clear. Achieving comfort, calm, and clarity involves managing our time, setting our priorities, and being flexible. We say, "I don't have time to care for myself." In reality, we do not have time *not* to care for ourselves. Many people associate discipline with self-effort or rigidity, rather than as the means to get something we truly want. Actually, we can also be rigid in our passivity and lack of discipline.

To achieve balance and moderation, we look inside and align how we are living with what we want our lives to be. In this way, we will have the energy and integrity to honor and respect both ourselves and those we serve. Contemplating this question assists in setting priorities: "How can I care for family and work, or ask others to care for themselves, if I do not also care for myself?" To serve well, we need to prepare ourselves for service and to maintain our well-being. We do this by attending to our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

The physical body is the instrument through which service expresses in the world. Vital and enthusiastic service is difficult if the body is physically ill, drained, uncomfortable, or in pain. When we fail to care for our physical health, our energy field becomes dense, impeding intuition, knowledge, and guidance from the True Self. When we cannot open ourselves to receive the infinite sup-

ply of higher energies, we use our limited personal reservoir of energy. As we deplete our energy supply, the physical body becomes strained and we experience fatigue or illness.

When Mother Teresa gathered her first group of nuns to serve the dying among the destitute of Calcutta, she required them to eat and live like those they served. Soon many of the nuns became ill and were unable to work. By neglecting themselves in the name of service, they negated their ability to serve. Mother Teresa quickly recognized that she and her nuns needed a balanced diet and adequate housing to carry out their work.

In the early 1970s I began leading workshops in personal healing. Often I became ill afterwards, suffering a severe sore throat that lasted several weeks. In my naivete I was unaware that leading these workshops required considerable energy. I gave away my personal energy when I focused attention on workshop attendees who were resistant or emotionally needy. At that time I was unaware of the impact of my diet and life-style on my energies. My physical body was not strong enough to hold the higher energies I was evoking. Once I recognized the relationship between the workshops and the illness, I asked my True Self for a healing dream.

A group of people had driven my 1966 Volvo, and it had broken down. They have called AAA for help. I arrive at my car just as the mechanic looks under the hood. He says, "The battery of this car needs thirteen gallons of water." He fills the battery, and the people leave. I get in the Volvo and turn the key in the ignition. The car starts, and I drive away.

The dream revealed that my recurrent illness occurred because my body, my vehicle, became dehydrated during the workshops.

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Other people, the workshop participants, “drove” my vehicle until the battery, the conductor of energy, was depleted of water. Because my energy was low, I was vulnerable to assuming responsibility for the needs and behaviors of others. I needed water to recharge my energies. Once I increased my water intake before and during workshops, the sore throats ceased.

The physical, emotional, and mental aspects of health interrelate. Pure water and food, cleanliness, proper sleep, physical exercise, and ample fresh air and sunshine are essential to physical well-being. A regimen of energy-balancing exercises, body massages, and body-movement practices also enhances our self-discipline and our physical well-being. When we surround ourselves with soothing colors and inspirational music, we feel nurtured and uplifted. When we do not create a balance among the different aspects of our health, our system rebels. Usually this is first experienced as physical exhaustion but also manifests in emotional instability or depression and mental confusion.

EMOTIONAL, MENTAL, AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Neglect of emotional and mental health is neglect of the inner work needed to evolve the soul. The inner strength and stability necessary to solve problems and to stand firm, poised in spirit, are evidence of emotional, mental, and spiritual health. When the inner nature is still, serene, unruffled, quiet, and clear, the intuition delivers accurate impressions from the True Self. Clarity of intuition is difficult, if not impossible, when emotions or the outer environment impinges upon the mind.

Everything we see, hear, touch, and read impacts us, giving color and movement to our emotions. Unless we are aware, every whim and fancy in the environment may captivate us. Roberto

Assagioli emphasizes the profound influence our surroundings have on our psychology, pointing out that we can pollute our psychological environment just as we pollute our physical environment. Aggression, violence, fear, depression and despondency, greed, and harmful competitiveness are some of the external “poisons” that affect our psychological health. To acquire and maintain sound emotional and mental health, Assagioli advises that we eliminate these poisons, both externally and internally.

For example, being in the presence of someone who is endlessly chattering is a form of psychological pollution demanding our energy and potentially drawing us off center. Our goal in maintaining emotional and mental health is to increase our awareness of our inner state. In this way, we stay alert to such situations that can drain our energy and deprive us of our sense of self.

The discipline of regular meditation increases our awareness of our inner state so that we are increasingly able to hold an attitude of meditation throughout the day in our ordinary activities. Stilling the mind allows us to consciously connect to the True Self, enhancing our awareness of a higher plan and honing our intuition and dreams as sources of information and direction. Meditation leads to contemplation, in which we enter into that silence that allows us to tap the Divine Mind. Our goal in meditation is to discover the faculties and powers of the mind, eventually tapping the truth at its source and entering into the mind of God.

From this perspective, our emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being arises from our being in the world but not of it. We do not turn our back upon the world but face it from the level of our soul. We look clear-eyed upon the world of human affairs without falling prey to its illusions. The love of our soul begins to pour through us, and we merge into an awareness of the good of all humanity.

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SYNTHESIS

*Over and over,
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Although we may not gaze at it directly, our shadow pervades our life and thus our service. We act from our shadow of service whenever we neglect our well-being as servers and when we react to those we serve with rejection, blame, superiority, guilt, anger, or fear. Our inner desire to be whole urges us to confront our shadow and face our conflicts about giving and receiving service.

Meeting our shadow of service permits us to develop an ongoing and right relationship with it, to expand awareness of self, and to unearth buried potentials and hidden motivations. The shadow is both a container of darkness and a beacon pointing toward the light. With honest self-examination, we gain more complete knowledge of our conscious and unconscious motivations. Standing free of guilt associated with our negative feelings and actions about life and service, we achieve a genuine acceptance of ourselves and those we serve. By recognizing the projections that color our opinion of those we serve, we cease adding our personal darkness to the density of the collective shadow.

Choosing to learn from and with those we serve requires time, commitment, and skill on the continuum of change from outer to inner focus. Over and over, we bring the shadow to the light for examination, and gradually we see ourselves as we really are, not as we wish to be, or assume ourselves to be. This exercise of the willingness to meet the shadow of service builds the first step toward True Service.