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“When life itself seems lunatic, who knows where madness lies? Perhaps to be too practical is madness. To surrender dreams--this may be madness. To seek treasure where there is only trash. Too much sanity may be madness. And maddest of all, to see life as it is and not as it should be!”

Man of La Mancha, Dale Wasserman

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Chapter Seven

Life As It Should Be

Insight #7 We will never know what life is all about, or what human sexuality is all about—unless we come to know what being human is all about. If we listen to our hearts and our souls we will come to know our true identity and the true purpose of sexual desire.

The real “facts of life” begin with a correct understanding of human life--as it is or as it should be. The duck story illustrates this idea.

When our family numbered eight children, we bought an old farm house with eight acres--an acre apiece for the Sorensen kids to run, skip, hop, hoop and holler on. It wasn't much of a farm, and we were not much at farming, but we wanted our family to have some of the enriching experiences of farm life. We acquired chickens, turkeys, horses, dogs, and one lonely little duck given to us by some friends. Rather than make a whole pen for one measly

duck we put him in the pen with the chickens.

It wasn't long until the little guy became convinced that he was also a chicken. He fell right in line behind all the chicks as they followed their mother around the chicken pen.

It was cute and we all laughed watching the duck that thought he was a chicken, until he became a teenage duck and his hormones kicked into gear. It was then that all the trouble started. Those geared-up hormones caused him to chase the chickens all around the yard. It seems that he was ready to start his own little family. The chickens, on the other hand, would have nothing to do with him. Nature never intended for ducks and chickens to mate. The faster he chased a chicken, the faster she would run, until both dropped from exhaustion. After a few minutes' rest, the duck would get up and begin the chase again.

The chickens quit laying eggs, and our neighbors started calling with complaints: "What is going on over there? Can't you keep those chickens quiet?"

"The problem is not the chickens," I would attempt to explain. "It's the duck that's chasing the chickens."

"Well, do something! We can't hear ourselves think!"

We had a family counsel and discussed the problem. Someone suggested, "Get a female duck for the male." Good idea--or so we thought. We asked our friends who owned a whole pond of ducks if they would provide a "bride" for the hormonally deranged duck.

We were all excited when we placed her in the pen with the male; we were certain it would be love at first sight. No chance! He didn't even give her a second look. My husband joked that, "She just didn't look like the 'chicks' that he had been hang'n around with."

Now visualize this. The lonely duck is going crazy chasing a dozen chickens around. The female duck is chasing him with equal determination, but he is totally ignoring her, and the neighbors keep calling with complaints. Now they have cackling and quackling!

The story is not over, yet. While we were thinking seriously of doing something--anything--Miss Duck did. She decided--like a smart woman--to stop chasing and start building her own life. All day long--while he chased the chickens--she gathered bits of this and pieces of that to build a nest. Then one day, finally satisfied, she sat down right in the middle of the nest. From then on, she laid one egg a day, and faithfully sat on them. Obviously, she resolved that if she could not have a man, she would at least have a family.

There was a serious problem, however. She, evidently, didn't understand the facts of life; her eggs had not been fertilized. No matter how faithfully she sat upon them, they would never hatch.

Finally our sons Aaron and Shiloh (then about eight and ten) took pity on her, and put some fertilized chicken eggs in her nest. After awhile the baby chicks hatched out and adopted the duck as their mother. Now all of nature was turned topsy-turvy. We had a duck that thought he was a chicken, and baby chicks that thought they were ducks. Talk about identity crises!

After the chicks were grown and the problem still had not resolved itself, Aaron and Shiloh decided to help the ducks discover their true identities. They gathered them up in their arms, carried them to the top of our four story water tower, and tossed them off. The two ducks hollered a protest at such cruel treatment, spread their wings and flew away--together. For a few days they were seen honeymooning in the creek. Then they eventually flew away--we

hoped to live happily ever after. About once or twice a year the children would come running and shouting, “They’re back; they’re in the creek floating around!”

Once in awhile I would follow the children down to the creek to see our old friends-the male duck that thought he was a chicken, and the female duck that was rejected. Finally they had discovered their divine destinies and ultimate happiness!

We learn so much from this duck story! (The obvious is that happiness doesn’t come with chasing chicks around.) They lived happily ever after only after discovering the “real” thing--marital bliss. But marital bliss could not have taken place had the male duck not discovered his true identity. *Likewise, we will never know what life is all about, or what human sexuality is all about--unless we come to know what being human is all about.*

Discovering our True Identity

Let’s begin this exploration into our true identity with a simple question: who am I? Let’s discover our true identities. Close your eyes and ask the question, “Who am I? What am I?” Pause and allow your identity to surface in your thinking. What makes you the person that you are? Begin with your physical body. Pay attention to your legs, feet, arms and hands. There’s definite feeling in them, but they do not have the power to think or reason, and there’s certainly no emotional feelings radiating from them. They respond or follow orders from a master control center. That’s what we’re looking for, the “control centers” of our being. If a leg or an arm were to be amputated, there would be no less of your identity. What

then does compose the real you?

Think about the *stomach*. Even though it doesn't think, it has the ability to let us know when it needs attention. It can become a major control center if we allow it. Like a spoiled brat, it can shout within, "I want the whole bowl of chocolate chip cookie batter! I've had a hard day, I deserve to eat it! Besides, who even cares what I do? There isn't a single soul in this whole universe that even cares whether or not I eat this batter.. umm, good." The stomach is definitely a control center and it can become a master control center if we let it.

Now take note of what's below the stomach, the *genital area*; there is definite sensation there. The "electricity" can be increased or decreased according to the stimulus--either physical or mental. A romantic movie may increase it, while a sweaty game of basketball decreases it. Over-stimulated and under-disciplined, this control center can take over to become a terrifying master of our whole being.

Now let's turn to another part of our being--*the mind*. Even as we read these words we can discern the thought waves as they radiate from this control center--it creates thoughts and pictures, it analyzes and draws conclusions. Obviously this is a major control center of our identity.

Some would stop right here and say that humans are composed of a body with an advanced computer--the "trousered ape." But there's another control center that's very alive and very much a part of our uniqueness. We call it *the heart*, or the center of emotion. It swells with feelings of love or happiness, and it seems to break with feelings of despair. While the mind handles the reasoning process, the heart responds to stimuli that trigger

emotions.

Besides these control centers there's still more to our identity.

The Spirit which Gives Life to the Body

This control center is widely accepted by those of faith, but questioned by those without faith--it is the *soul or the spirit*. In Christian theology, the spirit is that which gives life to the body--like a hand in a glove. The glove looks as if it has life when the hand is inside, but when the hand is removed, the glove is lifeless. In this same way the spirit gives life to the body.

The New Testament speaks of the soul. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," said Jesus recorded by Matthew (22:37). Recently, evidence has come to light, which documents the reality of the soul, especially with the many "after life" experiences. Dr. Raymond Moody noticed that many of his patients--who had "died" for a few minutes, but come back to life--had similar experiences while their spirits were out of the body. He sums up their stories with this experience:

"A man is dying and, as he reaches the point of greatest physical distress, he. . .begins to hear an uncomfortable noise, a loud ringing or buzzing, and at the same time feels himself moving very rapidly through a long tunnel. After this, he suddenly finds himself outside of his own physical body, but still in the immediate physical environment, and he sees his own body from a distance, as though he is a spectator. . .He notices that he still has a body but one of a very different nature and with very different powers from the

physical body he has left behind. . .a being of light appears before him. This being non-verbally asks him a question to make him evaluate his life and helps him along by showing him a panoramic, instantaneous playback of the major events of his life. . .” (Reflections on Life After Life, p. 6)

My favorite “after-life” experience is recorded by George Ritchie, a psychiatrist. As a young soldier during World War II, he was confined to a hospital with a case of pneumonia. During the night his body dies and his spirit leaves the hospital. He writes,

“Looking down I was astonished to see not the ground but the tops of mesquite trees beneath me. . .My mind kept telling me that what I was doing was impossible, and yet. . .it was happening. A town flashed by beneath me, caution lights blinking at the intersections. This was ridiculous! A human being couldn’t fly without an airplane!”

“Gradually I began to notice something else. All of the living people we were watching were surrounded by a faint luminous glow, almost like an electrical field over the surface of their bodies. This luminosity moved as they moved, like a second skin made out of pale, scarcely visible light. . .(I realized) that my own unsolid body was without this glowing sheath.”

“God is busy building a race of men who know how to love,” he wrote at the end of his book, “I believe that the fate of the earth itself depends on the progress we make--and that the time now is

very short. As for what we'll find in the next world, I believe that what we'll discover there depends on how well we get on with the business of loving, here and now." (George G. Ritchie, Return From Tomorrow, pages 38, 59, 124).

Free Will and Conscience

There are two other attributes of human nature that were recognized by the American view: free will and conscience. With the gift of life comes the gift to direct that life; in other words, we are not merely programmed or conditioned to think and act a certain way. Regardless of dysfunctional families, we have the power to direct our own lives, and regardless of society's values, we have an inner guide that senses right from wrong.

This is not to say that we are not affected by hereditary and environmental factors, but, despite these factors and with Divine assistance, we can choose to change, choose to break away from negative patterns, choose to form new ideas, choose to create new habits. We are "endowed by (our) Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

In the next chapter we will explore these two attributes; both are important in the discussion of sexual responsibility and ethics.