

## UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN CONDITION 1

1. To love yourself is essential if you are to become well balanced, happy and fulfilled. When there is no true value of yourself, then your potential and abilities remain dormant.
2. The greatest gift that childhood has to offer is the gift of self-love. It is self-love that enables you to be patient, compassionate and understanding towards yourself and others. Without self-love there is always the feeling that something is missing in your life.
3. Your parents, or those who were responsible for your upbringing, helped to shape who you are through their values, views, attitudes and behaviours. Your personality has largely been constructed by the environments you were exposed to, particularly during the first 14 years. Look closely and you will see how many traits and tendencies you unwittingly carry with you today, which were conceived in your developing years.
4. Understanding the role that the past plays in shaping who you are today, is not about renouncing responsibility in the present. To the contrary, it is the first step on the path towards liberation and regaining control in the present. Your personal history helps you to see why you have become who you are today and what you can do to change the self-limiting aspects of your personality.
5. The reason for looking back down the corridor of time is not to apportion blame, but to gain a better understanding of the forces that have shaped you, in order that you can be free of them. When you examine your past, you will discover that many of the undesirable things you experienced at the hands of those who cared for you, took place because they did not have enough love, tolerance, patience or whatever it was you needed, to give to you. Think about it, can anyone really give what they do not have?
6. Who or what is the child within? The child within is the part of you that always retains the child-like qualities you were born with. It is the most vulnerable and fragile part of you, the part of you that is sensitive to the messages of the outside world. The child within is also your powerhouse, filled with imagination, creativity, innocence, beauty, and natural love. Your child is that part of you that is brimming with vibrant enthusiasm for life. To be truly emotionally healthy you need to respect and value the child within.
7. The child within, if not understood, valued, and respected, becomes unable to express itself. This means as an adult you can become trapped in a number of ways. For example: you may get caught up in patterns of attention seeking behaviour, or repeatedly punish yourself for making mistakes. You may find you are unable to have intimate, meaningful relationships with others, or not be able to express your thoughts, ideas, and feelings because you can't find the words to say what you really mean.
8. Shame is the emotion that is least understood and yet most enslaves us. Shame is the feeling that deep down there is something wrong with us and that we are not good enough. Shame is the feeling that we will eventually be found out, and the truth about who we really are will be exposed to the world. Shame keeps us hiding, pretending, entangled in a web of denial, deception, and fear. When we begin to understand the role that shame plays in keeping us trapped, then we can become free.
9. Shame is the parent of our doubts, inadequacies, lies, fears, and pretences. The many masks we learn to wear through our lives, exist because of our need to be liked. We learn, early on, that we are probably not going to be good enough if we are just ourselves, and so we develop different facades in order that we might become accepted by others. The price we pay for this is to lose ourselves.