

GIFTEDNESS FOR ALL SEASONS: INNER PEACE IN A TIME OF WAR

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Abstract

This is a study of three lives in transformation, two of which are directly concerned with the issue of war: Etty Hillesum, a young Jewish woman who lived in the Nazi occupied Amsterdam and later died in Auschwitz and Peace Pilgrim, an American woman who started walking for peace at the time of the Korean war. The third, Ashley, is a contemporary woman, mother of two. The lives of these three gifted individuals illustrate characteristics of transforming growth: inner conflict, acceptance, willingness to serve, surrender, and inner peace. As a result of their far reaching inner transformation, they discovered on their own the transpersonal principle of nonseparateness. From the depth of their being they know that inner peace is the necessary condition of world peace. These cases illustrate in greater depth than was previously available the higher levels in Dabrowski's theory of emotional development. They also bring out the deeper meaning and effectiveness of acceptance which the theory has neglected.

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"The task facing us is twofold. • One is to work to relieve the suffering of the world. The other is to work to relieve the psychological causes, starting first within ourselves, that contribute to this suffering."

Roger Walsh, 1984

"Ultimate peace begins within; when we find peace within there will be no more conflict, no more occasion for war."

Peace Pilgrim, 1955

"True peace will come only when every individual finds peace within himself; when we have all vanquished and transformed our hatred for our fellow human beings of whatever race— even into love one day."

Etty Hillesum , 1942

This paper was begun with the simple idea of illustrating higher levels of development as described by Dabrowski's theory of emotional development, a theory especially applicable to the gifted and to the type of development that leads to self-actualization (cf. Note 1 for introductory sources). But, as my study of the case material proceeded, I was struck by two principles active in those who have undergone far-reaching inner transformation. One is the principle of nonseparateness, a transpersonal perspective which says that we are all cells in one body of humanity. The other is that inner peace is a necessary condition of world peace. These principles are of such overriding significance that a detailed documentation of the characteristics of each level had to yield to the task of presenting the perspective from which these people see things.

This paper is short on theory but thick in case material and direct quotations. Not because theory cannot be applied with great rigor, but rather that lives can speak for

themselves and deliver their message to us. Theory organizes, but also reduces. When it comes to case material, reduction is an unpardonable distortion because it results in critical loss of meaning. The value of theory, in this case Dabrowski's theory, is that it enables us to identify people who are beacons of self-actualization and transcendence. Theory helps to articulate the significance of the transpersonal perspective in the evolution of our consciousness. The transpersonal framework stresses the fact that our consciousness as of the whole of humanity is evolving. And where there is a growing edge we find the gifted. Indeed, who else could be there?

Dabrowski's Theory—Very Lightly

There is today a growing concern to find and nurture human potential for altruism, self-actualization, and high level of moral development. We need tools for identification and cultivation of such potentials. Dabrowski's theory of emotional development is such a tool; it is a theory of human transcendence toward a life inspired by universal ideals of human brotherhood, peace, service, and self-realization. The theory arose from his extensive clinical experience with gifted and talented children, adolescents, and adults. One of the basic characteristics of the gifted is their intensity and an expanded field of their subjective experience. The intensity, in particular, must be understood as a qualitatively distinct characteristic. It is not a matter of degree but of a different quality of experiencing: vivid, absorbing, penetrating, encompassing, complex, commanding — a way of being quiveringly alive. Dabrowski discerned in it five dimensions: psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginal, and emotional. The strength of these five dimensions, together with special talents and abilities, constituted for him the concept of developmental potential, a potential for transforming growth and self-actualization (Piechowski, 1979, 1991).

Assisting the talented in emotional crises precipitated by their enhanced feeling and

thinking, Dabrowski saw that their development was often guided by genuine idealism; at the same time, it could be difficult, painful, and disorienting. For many people it was a struggle between the lower and the higher in themselves, between a felt ideal— a higher value — and one's failure to live up to it.

Dabrowski visualized personality development as a hierarchy of five levels (see Table 1) which he elaborated in great detail. The description is available elsewhere (Brennan & Piechowski, in press; Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977; Nelson, 1989; Piechowski, 1991).

Because the levels represent different types of motivation (Miller & Silverman, 1987), they can be represented as progressively deeper sources of motivation. The higher self is often referred to as the deepest, the innermost part of one's being; therefore, the more one's motives originate from that inner center, the more inspired they become. Viewed this way, the depth is potentially in each one of us, but it is realized only in a few. And yet, the case material to be presented here points to a greater number of people exemplifying the higher level than is normally believed. Seen this way, Level I represents the plane of ordinary living, limited by ignorance, by the urge to protect oneself and gain advantage, usually at the expense of others. This is a very narrow and limited way of living, otherwise called the instrumental approach to life, because it operates on the principle of use and exploitation of resources and people. When we reach a little deeper (level II) we come upon the interesting landscape of feelings and emotions, but unfortunately very conflicted and often confused. Motivated from this level, one takes the lead from one's gut feelings, right or wrong; being easily swayed by shifts in opinion, one tends to follow others but without enduring loyalty, just until the next wagon comes around. Going one level deeper (level III), inner life becomes differentiated into many strata with a basic sense of higher and lower in

oneself. There is much inner conflict here and a struggle to follow the higher impulse. One feels a call to something higher, a longing for a more meaningful and ideal life in which truth, beauty, and love endure. There is a growing conviction that absolute ideals are real. Level III, then, is the season of inner conflict in which there is a continuing struggle between the lower and the higher in oneself. When this struggle eases, it opens a transition to the next level. Deeper down (Level IV), one gains inner strength from living closer to the center of one's being; consequently one's will flows more readily into action. One lives what one believes. There is profound caring and recognition of the common essence of all human beings. Finally, at the deepest level (level V), we find the "magnetic field in the soul" or the "source of universal energy," the point of realization of one's true self, one's transcendent nature in the "communion of saints." Will and action are united and operate effortlessly.

Three Lives in Transformation

What I wish to do here is to draw on three cases to illustrate how transforming growth works. While in the past we have had some success finding case material representing each of the first four developmental levels (levels I-IV), we have been short of cases in which the processes of transformation were recorded as they occurred. The first breakthrough came with a gift from Ashley, a university professor who wanted to create a record of her own inner development and, in this way, sort things out for herself. She wrote extensive answers to an instrument for assessment of developmental level (Gage et al., 1981) once a year over a period of four years. The second breakthrough came with a friend sending me "Steps Toward Inner Peace" by Peace Pilgrim, who in 1953, at the age of 44, started a 25,000-mile pilgrimage on foot for peace, and whose talks and appearances have been recorded and collected in a book (Peace Pilgrim, 1982). The third breakthrough came via an article by Kathleen Spaltro

(1991) about the diaries of Etty Hillesum, a young Jewish woman living in Amsterdam in World War II, who left us a most remarkable record of her spiritual growth.

These three cases illustrate transforming growth in rich detail and bear out Dabrowski's conceptions of multilevel growth (levels III and IV) and secondary integration (level V). All three lives complement each other and represent different phases of transforming growth as well as alternative paths. They have much in common yet are extraordinarily individual and unique. Peace Pilgrim exemplifies the highest level of development and offers a direct view of a life simplified and perfected into a consummate union with the "all pervading spirit — which binds everything in the universe together and gives life to everything." Hers is the pure gold of level V. Although she outlined the earlier phases of her spiritual growth, she did not give much detail as to the nature of the processes involved. Insight into these comes from the diaries of Etty Hillesum who set down her inner growth in great detail. We can easily discern in her descriptions the succession of levels III and IV and the threshold of level V. There are a number of parallels between Peace Pilgrim and Etty that make their combined lives seem like one continuity of inner growth. In their lives, love perfects the will. Ashley exemplifies a different path — an uncompromising search for perfection — a life in which the will perfects action as work of love. The record of her inner growth is the purest, most clearly focused expression of level IV, in part because she was responding to questions designed as tools for level assessment (Gage, Morse, & Piechowski, 1981), and in part because of her unceasing self-examination and unwavering self-direction. All three are gifted individuals. Peace Pilgrim's intelligence is evident in the clarity of her expression (in high school she was captain of the debating team) and her inter- and intra-personal intelligence was evident when she was a child. Etty and Ashley are both intellectually gifted, at the same time they are

superb examples of intra-personal intelligence (Gardner, 1983).

All three reached the view that inner life determines the outer situation not only for the individual but on a world scale. Apparently, at a certain level of development, it becomes supremely clear that we are not separate islands but "cells in one body of humanity." Consequently what goes on in each cell, in the privacy of one's mind, affects the whole. Hence their conviction, and in Pilgrim's case borne out of direct knowledge, that peace in the world will be secure only as each and every one of us works toward inner peace. Interestingly, this was something Eleanor Roosevelt believed, too. In her essay, The Moral Basis of Democracy, she wrote that democracy will progress only as the people's personal development will move forward; that only by everyone being willing to enact a Christ-like way of life can democracy be guaranteed (Roosevelt, 1940).

ETTY HILLESUM, "THE THINKING HEART OF THE BARRACKS"

Exactly fifty years ago in 1941, at the start of her diary, Etty Hillesum was 27 years old. Living in Amsterdam, a few blocks away from Anne Frank, she was a student of Russian and earned her living tutoring in Russian. She described herself as not particularly pretty, but fantasized about being beautiful and drawing attention to herself. With her black hair, emotional intensity and animation, she was described by some as a "Russian Carmen." Her quick intelligence and vivid imagination were matched by her great capacity for loving and making love. She had many friends and many lovers. She described herself as adventurous and "accomplished in bed, just about seasoned enough I should think to be counted among the better lovers, and love does suit me to perfection" (Hillesum, 1981/1985, p. 1). She was 15 when the urge to write awakened in her. She certainly had what it takes to be a writer: "an irrepressible objective curiosity, a passionate interest in everything that touches the world and its people and my own motives" (p. 41).

When Amsterdam was occupied by the Germans, the Jews were more and more restricted and gradually transferred to Westerbork, a transit camp, and from there transported to concentration camps in Poland. As long as she could, Etty continued with her tutoring and other jobs. She was given work as a typist with the Jewish Council, an organization which mediated between the Jews and the Nazis and which was under the illusion of protecting the Jews. From there, Etty volunteered for Westerbork where she was a 'luminous' presence to many. Her parents and her brother, a gifted pianist, ended there, too. They all died in Auschwitz in the latter part of 1943.

In Dabrowski's terms, Etty's inner growth is a clear example of transforming growth, of which the first phase (level III) is the conflict between the higher and the lower in oneself. The lower is what one wants to remove; hence this is what one does not

accept in oneself. In the first part of the diary we witness her inner struggles to fight restlessness, inner chaos, depression, despair, and physical pain. These struggles brought her more confidence in herself, a sense of growing stronger and of gaining more inner freedom. Dabrowski stressed the rejection of the lower self as the essential dynamic of multilevel growth. His theory makes no reference to acceptance other than to equate it with complacency. But as Etty resolved her inner conflicts, she grew in acceptance of herself and of life in its entirety, with all the good and all the bad. To have the insight on what self-acceptance means is like the discovery of an important principle. We find it in Etty's diary and in Peace Pilgrim's and in Ashley's accounts of their inner journeys.

Acceptance frees a great deal of energy tied up in resistance, fear, and in the rejection of one's reality in the here and now. Etty's acceptance went further, to a sense of life as an eternal stream above and beyond the horrors of war. To her, the war, privations, restrictions, extermination of Jews, were problems that resulted from the hatred and "the rottenness we all carry within us." She believed that our individual task is to weed out all that is negative from ourselves before we can expect hatred and wars to cease.

There are many significant themes that run through her diary. Her own inner growth, her inner journey, is the principal theme; hatred as the problem of our age is another. Depression and suffering, as well as her frequent health problems, appear as occasions for doing battle to victory or for insight and acceptance. Inner peace and her inner space are themes in close connection with her life of prayer and her intimate relationship with God whom she found within herself: "that part of myself, that deepest and richest part in which I repose, is what I call 'God'." Her sense of life as an eternal current from which she could draw strength directly is another significant theme, and

so is preparation. She was preparing herself for the trials and hardships that lay ahead, as well as her death. When she went to Westerbork, she could see that people suffered primarily because of lack of inner preparation.

"Combat Ready"

Let us take a closer look at some aspects of Etty's inner transformation and the way she went about it. She started with a quest for finding direction and meaning to her life. Just about a month before the first entry into her diary, Etty went to see Julius Spier, a psychotherapist of a rather unusual sort who worked through highly intuitive insight by reading people's hands. He also worked through body contact; he even wrestled with his patients. The relationship with Spier was a catalyst to Etty's inner growth and Spaltro (1991) examined this relationship more closely.

Etty sought his help because she felt beset by inner chaos, tension, recurrent depressions, emptiness, lack of direction in her inner life— an "inner constipation." She was unhappy in the self-absorbed way of the neurotic: "I honestly thought I was the unhappiest person in the world" (p. 140). It is hard to believe, and yet the diary and evidence of those who knew her bear out, that in two and a half years — from early 1941 to late 1943 — Etty Hillesum transformed her hedonistic joy of life, as well as her depressions and uncertainty, into a fortress of inner peace, intimate relationship with God, and affirmation of life.

There is no way to convey the richness, depth, and joyous affirmation of life that was Etty's even in the most depressing circumstances of a concentration camp. I wish to call attention to several striking features of her life and to her conviction that peace in the world will be possible only to the degree as each of us works toward inner peace.

Her first goal for therapy with Spier was to be able to give her life a "reasonable and satisfactory purpose" (p. 1). Her more distant goal was "to finish up as an adult,

capable of helping other souls who are in trouble, and of creating some sort of clarity through my work for others, for that's what it's all about" (p. 9). Although modestly expressed, there is a sense of mission, of a goal outside herself, a characteristic of self-actualizing people; there is also an emphasis on being of service to others. She took up the work of inner psychic transformation. But it was hard going at first. She realized that fantasy and escapist dreams would not gain her peace and clarity: "It is right here, in this very place, in the here and now, that I must find them. But it is all so very terribly difficult and I feel so heavy-hearted" (p. 36). Nevertheless, she persevered and found the key principle, which is to live in the present. To be mature, to be an adult is one of the recurrent themes in her diary: growth toward self-control, responsibility, inner peace, overcoming ill-health and weakness of the body, and inner preparation for the more and more severe trials ahead.

The first inner change she recorded was a release from possessiveness, from a desire to hold and own forever, whether it be a person, a flower or a special moment.

"I was too sensual, I might almost write too greedy. I yearned physically for all I thought was beautiful, wanted to own it. Hence that painful longing that could never be satisfied It all suddenly changed, God alone knows by what inner process, but it is different now . . . I reacted quite differently. I felt that God's world was beautiful despite everything, but its beauty now filled me with joy. I was just as deeply moved by that mysterious, still landscape in the dusk, as I might have been before, but somehow I no longer wanted to own it." [p. 13]

While previously that never satisfied desire to hold on and to possess sapped her energy, this resolution and sense of release — a significant inner shift — invigorated her. She found these struggles thrilling. She became a fighter and Spier told her she was "combat ready."

She recorded her battles, some of which were "short but violent." Each inner victory made her stronger. Characteristically she never exaggerated or overestimated her progress. Consequently she did not waste energy in berating herself or declaring

herself a failure: "I have become just a little stronger again. I can fight things with myself I had the desperate feeling that I was tied to him and that because of that I was in for an utterly miserable time. But I pulled myself out of it although I don't know quite how. Not by arguing with myself, but by tugging with all my mental strength at some imaginary rope. I threw all my weight behind it and stood my ground and suddenly I felt that I was free again" (p. 29). Once that possessive attachment was broken, she placed no more expectations on the other: "I made no more demands on him, I wanted nothing from him, I took him as he was and enjoyed him " (p. 29). She was puzzled by the process, and understandably so. We grow up with much advice and exhortation to be good, but little light on how to fight our inner battles to become good. "I'd like to know how I did it And the lesson I learned is this: thought doesn't help; what you need is not causal explanations but will and a great deal of mental energy" (p. 3).

In the initial phase of transforming growth (level III) one tries to find the true meaning and purpose to one's life. The process does not go smoothly: "I still lack a basic tune, a steady undercurrent; the inner source that feeds me keeps drying up" (p. 37). But within a few weeks she recorded progress: "I no longer go to pieces under the strain of my disparate feelings," and better still, "I sometimes feel like a post standing in a raging sea, lashed on all sides by the waves" (p. 41).

She fought many conflicts within herself and she resolved all of them: jealousy gave way to love, appreciation, and freedom; dislike of her mother gave way to understanding and empathy; feeling inhibited and self-conscious with her father was replaced by warmth toward him; conflicts over her writing, guilt over leading an easy life when others suffered increasing hardship, her recurrent ill-health, lack of self-control, lack of self-discipline, depressions, upsets, turmoil and relapses all were resolved in an increasingly deliberate and determined effort at inner psychic

transformation. The key effort was striving for emotional self-reliance, and the key to that was her spirit of acceptance and receptiveness.

"It is a slow and painful process, this striving after true inner freedom. Growing more and more certain that there is no help or assurance or refuge in others, that the others are just as uncertain and helpless and weak as you are. You are always thrown back to your own resources. There is nothing else" (p. 56). Every situation, every external difficulty, every increase in the Nazi terror brought her back to her own inner work: "I have gradually come to realize that on those days when you are at odds with your neighbours you are really at odds with yourself" (p. 66). She expressed her sense of growth in phrases such as this: "Everything is a growing process. And in between, emotions and sensations that strike you like lightning. But still the most important thing is the organic process of growing" (p. 106).

She strove for simplicity, for a balance between her outer and her inner life. She described her goals for the practice of meditation: "to turn one's innermost being into a vast and empty plain, with none of the treacherous undergrowth to impede the view. So that something of 'God' can enter you, and something of 'Love' too. Not the kind of Love-de-luxe that you revel in deliciously for half an hour taking pride in how sublime you feel, but the love you can apply to small everyday things" (p. 27). The appreciation of "small everyday things" afresh is characteristic of self-actualizing people, and that came easily to her. Clearing the mind and the heart was a harder task, as it invariably is: "There is a really deep well inside me. And in it dwells God. Sometimes I am there too. But more often stones and grit block the well and God is buried beneath. Then He must be dug out again" (p. 4).

She began practicing meditation in early June of 1941. In November she recorded a sudden inner change: "Something has just happened to me It is as if I had been pulled back abruptly to my roots, and had become a little more self-reliant and independent" (p. 64). A couple of weeks later she described one of her peak experiences which apparently were fairly frequent: "everything feels calm again . . . a veil envelops me through which life seems more serene and often much friendlier as well. And a feeling of being at one with all existence. No longer: I want this or that, but: life is great and good and fascinating and eternal. . . . It is in these moments . . . that a small piece of eternity descends on me with a sweeping wingbeat" (pp. 74-75). She made an effort to listen to her inner voice, to follow her own rhythm, and live in accordance with it: "The only certainties about what is right and wrong are those which spring from sources deep inside oneself" (p. 75).

A Year of Intense Inner Growth

When she took stock of that first year on December 31, 1941, she evaluated it as the richest and most fruitful year of her life. "This year has meant . . . greater awareness and hence easier access to my inner resources. . . . And I listen to myself, allow myself to be led, not by anything on the outside, but by what wells up from within. It's still no more than a beginning, I know. But it is no longer a shaky beginning, it has already taken root" (p. 81). She felt that her inner growth was by then on a firm footing. This suggests, in Dabrowskian terms, that Etty's development reached level IV. Subsequent entries record that she was no longer subject to despair, that her inner world was "all peace and quiet. It was a difficult road, though it all seems so simple and obvious now" (p. 85). Now she could be calm and confident about the direction of her life, confident because she was in control of it, her inner self having won many battles

and gained a solid measure of inner peace. The extent of her inner transformation is well illustrated by the following excerpt from the last pages of her diary, at a time when she was very ill:

I am having to battle with impatience and dejection all the time today, brought on by pains in my back and that leaden feeling in my legs, which want so much to travel the world but cannot yet do so. It will come. But one should not be so materialistic. For even while I lie here, am I not traveling through the world?

The earth is in me and the sky. And I well know that something like hell can also be in one, though I no longer experience it in myself, but I can still feel it in others with great intensity. And that is as it should be, or else I might grow too complacent. [p. 239]

Within that year Etty became less upset over her setbacks and relapses, instead looking upon them as a measure of her growth: "It is a good thing from time to time to feel the emptiness and the weariness in yourself for a moment or two, just to recall how things used to be and how they are now" (p. 104). Later she said, "one must have the courage . . . to feel empty and discouraged" (p. 242). The change was toward greater confidence in her inner direction, stronger sense of her deeper self, more profound inner peace, a deepening sense of the meaning of life, and an encompassing love.

The Problem of Hatred

Besides the extent and depth of her spiritual growth, what gives her life a particular significance is her refusal — in the midst of increasing Nazi terror — to give in to hatred. Very early she recognized in herself that spontaneous impulse toward hatred of the Germans, which was shared by all around her, but it disturbed her that she felt this way (an example of inner conflict): "The whole nation must be destroyed root and branch. And now and then I say nastily, 'They are all scum,' and at the same time I feel terribly ashamed and deeply unhappy but can't stop even though I know that it's all wrong" (p. 11). She recognized that to hold such indiscriminate hatred was a sickness

of the soul and harmful to the one who succumbs to it. Etty, of course, was not the only one who saw that to hate is to give up hope for mankind and for a better world. She eventually realized that the spirit must be the victor:

They can't do anything to us, they really can't. They can harrass us, they can rob us of our material goods, of our freedom of movement, but we ourselves forfeit our greatest assets by our misguided compliance. By our feeling of being persecuted, humiliated, and oppressed. By our own hatred our greatest injury is one we inflict upon ourselves . . . True peace will come only when every individual finds peace within himself; when we have all vanquished and transformed our hatred for our fellow human beings of whatever race — even into love one day.
[p. 151]

From then on her inner growth exhibited characteristics of level IV.

Under the ever-more oppressive Nazi rule, she gradually realized that nothing less than a total annihilation of the Jewish race was in store, and yet she affirmed again and again that

The rottenness of others is in us, too. I see no other solution . . . than to turn inwards and to root out all the rottenness there. I no longer believe that we can change anything in the world until we have first changed ourselves. And that seems to me the only lesson to be learned from this war. That we must look inside ourselves and nowhere else. [p. 87, February 19, 1942]

Each of us must turn inwards and destroy in himself all that he thinks he ought to destroy in others . . . every atom of hate we add to this world makes it still more inhospitable. [p. 222, September 22, 1942].

The inner world of each individual forms the outer world, not the other way round, a principle affirmed by Peace Pilgrim and Ashley as well.

The Central Role of Acceptance

Her inner growth had several distinctive features: a genuine acceptance of life in its totality of all that is good and all that is bad, deep and abiding compassion; preparation for upcoming hardships, which she embraced willingly; prayer, as

evidenced by over thirty spontaneous personal prayers recorded in her diary; the silent voice of her deeper self; the sense of life itself as the source of meaning and strength; an inner peace, which she gained in greater and greater measure; and the riches of the vast inner spaces of her being.

The theme of acceptance is prominent ^{in her} diary. Acceptance can work marvels because it releases all the energy tied up in resistance, fear, and in opposition to one's reality in the here and now. To dream of being in a different situation where one thinks one's problems could be more effectively dealt with is a delusion and an escape from the only reality there is — the present moment. "Living and dying, sorrow and joy, the blisters on my feet [in the hot summer of 1942 the Jews were prohibited from using public transportation] and the jasmine behind the house, the persecution, the unspeakable horrors — it is all as one in me and I accept it all as one mighty whole and begin to grasp it better if only for myself, without being able to explain to anyone else how it all hangs together" (p. 161).

Etty said about Spier, "S. heals people by teaching them to suffer and to accept" (p. 77). Not only is acceptance of life a dominant theme in her diary, but also acceptance and the value of suffering: "most of us in the West don't understand the art of suffering and experience a thousand fears instead. We cease to be alive, being full of fear, bitterness, hatred and despair" (p. 159), and further, "man suffers most through his fear of suffering" (p. 230). In the context of the war and arrests, torture, and regular transports of Jews to the concentration camps in Poland, the view of suffering expressed by Etty is radical: "Suffering has always been with us, does it really matter in what form it comes?" (p. 159). "And the fact that, nowadays, we have yellow stars and concentration camps is of secondary importance" (p. 135), what is of primary

importance is "how we bear it and how we fit it into our lives" (p. 160).

"A Kneeler in Training"

Her acceptance became surrender, and this transformation cannot be understood without her prayer life. Etty found God within her inner being, of which she spoke at the very beginning of her diary as that really deep well inside her in which God dwells. At first she declared her willingness to serve in her vocation as a writer: "Oh God, take me into Your great hands and turn me into Your instrument, let me write" (p. 31). But in five months she moved toward surrender:

take me by Your hand, I shall follow You dutifully and not resist too much. I shall evade none of the tempests life has in store for me I shall try not to be afraid. I shall try to spend some of my warmth, of my genuine love for others, wherever I go. But we shouldn't boast of our love for others. We cannot be sure that it really exists. I don't want to be anything special, I only want to try to be true to that in me which seeks to fulfill its promise. I sometimes imagine that I long for the seclusion of a nunnery, but I know that I must seek You amongst people, out in the world. [pp. 64-65]

Often her prayer sprang out of deep feeling in a burst of gratitude. She described her prayers as love letters to God, "the only love letters one ought to write" (p. 239). A remarkable aspect of her spiritual dynamic was the spontaneous urge to drop down on her knees or to kneel within herself. To kneel and to fold one's hands in prayer was "a posture not handed down from generation to generation with us Jews" (p. 240, but one she learned from Julius Spier. She called herself "a kneeler in training" (p. 76) and her life the story of "the girl who could not kneel," or "the girl who learned to pray." "That is my intimate gesture, more intimate even than being with a man. After all one can't pour the whole of one's love out over a single man, can one?" (p. 240). Her urge to kneel could be unexpectedly intense: "A desire to kneel down sometimes pulses through my body, or rather it is as if my body had been meant and made for the act of kneeling.

Sometimes in moments of deep gratitude, kneeling down becomes an overwhelming urge, head deeply bowed, hands before my face. It has become a gesture embedded in my body" (p. 109).

Etty's prayer life was tested to the limit: "It is sometimes hard to take in and comprehend, oh God, what those created in Your likeness do to each other in these disjointed days . . . I try to look things straight in the face, even the worst crimes and to discover the small, naked human being amidst the monstrous wreckage caused by man's senseless deeds . . . I try to face up to Your world, God . . . I continue to praise Your creation, God, despite everything" (p. 141). She said this long before she went to Westerbork, the inhumanly overcrowded transit camp, where the extent of human misery was exhausting to the limits of her inner strength and compassion. She volunteered to go there in a spirit of preparation and in order to share in what others had to go through. Two weeks before she went from Westerbork on a transport to Auschwitz, Etty wrote about the terror that struck in her heart when she saw the coldly cruel and indifferent faces of the green-uniformed German guards: "I have never been so frightened of anything in my life as I was of these faces. I sank to my knees with the words that preside over human life. And God made man after His likeness. That passage spent a difficult morning with me" (p. 258). She knew that Westerbork was true hell.

One of her insights into the nature of prayer was how to pray for others, a logical extension of her principle of acceptance : "Praying to God for something for yourself strikes me as being too childish for words . . . to pray for another's wellbeing is something I find childish as well; one should only pray that another should have enough strength to shoulder his burden. If you do that, you lend him some of your own strength" (p. 192). Her insight into suffering complemented this. She came upon it in Westerbork in the wake of her prolonged struggle over having to witness her parents' and her brother's deprivation: "It will be my parents' turn to leave soon [on a transport], if by some miracle not this week then certainly one of the next. And I must learn to accept this as well . . . I shan't go, I just can't. It is easier to pray for someone from a distance than to see him suffer by your side. It is not fear of Poland that keeps me from going with my parents, but fear of seeing them suffer. And that, too, is cowardice" (p. 249). The crux of that fear and pain was that one can only accept for oneself and not for others. Two months later all the Hillesums were put on the same transport. Having to go with them hit Etty very hard at first, but she recovered and accepted it as she did all the difficult tests and hard trials.

She succeeded in also accepting those trials that felt too hard to endure. "A few days ago I thought that nothing more could happen to me, that I had suffered everything in anticipation, but today I suddenly realised that things can indeed weigh more heavily on me than I ever thought possible. And they were very, very heavy . . . But now I know that I shall always get the better of despair" (p. 191). And she did. She understood perfectly the true meaning of surrender, which is to say that what makes surrender true is when it becomes unconditional: "I shall have to surrender much more of me to You, oh God. And also stop making conditions: if only I remain healthy, and

so on . . . ' Even if I am not healthy, life goes on, doesn't it? I have no right to lay down conditions. I will not do so in the future. And the moment I made that resolution, my stomach-ache suddenly became quite a lot better" (p. 227).

Wide Plains Beyond Time and Space

If we could by some magical or mystic means see the inner space of Etty's heart and soul, we would be surprised by how vast, deep, varied, and rich it was. The theme of inner space takes a number of forms. She often felt the reverse of how we usually respond to our surroundings: that "the outer landscape was the reflection of the inner" (p. 80), that the sky within her was as wide as the one above (p. 151), that cherished things which were gone were alive within her ["somewhere inside me the jasmine continues to blossom undisturbed, just as profusely and delicately as ever it did" (p. 188)]. Her inner stillness was a calm space into which she withdrew to rest, pray, and restore herself. This vast silence within her continued to grow and expand, reaching into transcendent regions: "there are wide plains inside me beyond time and space, and everything is played out there" (p. 213). The inner space felt like a playground and war arena for the forces of conflict. This notion appeared to her quite early: "I feel like a small battlefield, in which problems, or some of the problems, of our time are being fought out. All one can hope to do is to keep oneself humbly available, to allow oneself to be a battlefield" (p. 30). She carried this idea even further to say that we must put our inner space at the service of these problems. In other words, we each share directly in the responsibility of how things go: "Ultimately we just have one moral duty: to reclaim large areas of peace in ourselves, more and more peace, and reflect it toward others. And the more peace there is in us, the more peace there will be also in our troubled world" (p. 229). Thus to Etty the outer and the inner worlds existed in an

exact relationship in which the inner shaped the outer, hence her conviction that "true peace will come only when every individual finds peace within himself" (p. 151). We will find the same principle enunciated by Peace Pilgrim.

A striking facet of Etty's inner world was her sense of life as an eternal current, a source of strength and inspiration, and to which she referred as something personified almost:

at unguarded moments, when left to myself, I suddenly lie against the naked breast of life and her arms around me are so gentle and protective and my own heartbeat is difficult to describe: so slow and so regular and so soft, almost muffled, but so constant, as if it would never stop. That is also my attitude to life and I believe that neither war nor any other senseless human atrocity will ever be able to change it. [p. 142]

The slowing down of her heartbeat suggests a meditative state in which much of the thought process has quieted down. The feeling that life is beautiful never left her, even to the last. Life to her was something greater and deeper than events, happenings, sorrow and joy — these were part of life's ebb and flow, but were not life itself. She often said that she drew strength directly from life. But she explained,

Does that mean I am never sad, that I never rebel, always acquiesce, and love life no matter what the circumstances? No, far from it. I believe that I know and share the many sorrows and sad circumstances that a human being can experience, but I do not cling to them, I do not prolong such moments of agony. They pass through me, like life itself, as a broad, eternal stream, they become part of that stream, and life continues. And as a result all my strength is preserved, does not become tagged on to futile sorrow or rebelliousness. [p. 100]

Her answer to the despair brought on by the Nazi reign of terror was that life was larger than this, that it had its own meaning, that it was a cosmic principle, indestructible and unaffected by all the cruelty and persecution in the world. She knew that few people could understand this though it enabled her to affirm, in the mud and

blowing sand (which was so bad that inmates begged those on the outside to send them goggles) behind the barbed wire of Westerbork, that life was beautiful. She knew it was strange to feel this amidst so much human misery but she did feel it — "that radiant feeling inside me, which encompasses but is untouched by all the suffering and all the violence" (p. 180) — and her serenity uplifted others. As noted by Gaarlandt in his introduction to Etty's diaries, survivors of Westerbork remembered her as a 'luminous' personality.

The transpersonal dimension came to Etty in a moment of insight. She was reflecting on the necessity of walking long distances in the summer heat with a blister on her foot when suddenly she realized that "throughout the ages people have been tired and have worn their feet out on God's earth, in the cold and the heat, and that, too, is part of life. This sort of feeling has been growing stronger in me: a hint of eternity steals through my smallest daily activities and perceptions. I am not alone in my tiredness or sickness or fears, but at one with millions of others from many centuries and it is all part of life" (p. 165).

To realize that one is not apart from others— in Peace Pilgrim's words, "to break through the illusion of separateness,"— is a significant step toward universal empathy, toward knowing what it means to love one's neighbor. "Through suffering I have learned that we must share our love with the whole of creation. Only thus we can gain admittance to it. But the price is high: much blood and tears. But all the suffering is worth it" (p. 154). Brought to its logical conclusion it means to be able to recognize the humanity of every individual no matter how evil that person's actions might be. And to see how difficult this can be for us, all we need to do is to think of our prime villains, whether highly placed, or living under the same roof with us, or on the highway in front

of us. Taking it even further we can decide to stop our angry thoughts at everyone else on whom we shower hostility within the privacy of our minds. If we are to take persons like Etty Hillesum and Peace Pilgrim seriously, then we must make every effort to stop violence where it starts — in our minds. Etty understood this as well as Peace did: "Why is there war? Perhaps because now and then I might be inclined to snap at my neighbor. Because I and my neighbor and everyone else do not have enough love. Yet we could fight war . . . by releasing, each day, the love which is shackled inside us, and giving it a chance to live" (p. 99).

PEACE PILGRIM, "AN EMBODIMENT OF THE HEART OF THE WORLD WHICH IS
PLEADING FOR PEACE"

When she started her pilgrimage, Peace Pilgrim simplified her life to a perfect minimum. She wore only one set of clothing and carried only a comb and a toothbrush. She gave up money, trusting her faith that she would be provided for. Her diet was simple: fruit vegetables, grains, occasional milk and cheese. She never asked for them but accepted food and shelter when they were offered. She was fond of saying that she never had to skip more than three or four meals in a row. When shelter was not offered, she kept on walking, finding a place to rest in the woods, by the roadside, under a bridge, or in a bus station.

Peace Pilgrim was born Mildred Norman on a farm in New Jersey, in 1908. Her sister said that, even as a child, Mildred had a bearing that made other children listen to what she had to say. As a young woman she was fond of expensive clothing and particular about matching her shoes, hat, and gloves. She was a popular dance partner. She was not a vegetarian then, neither was she free of prejudice, disapproving of her sister's friends who were of other races and classes. She eloped with a man who tried without success to start a business during the Depression. They divorced later. Mildred went on to work for fifteen years with emotionally disturbed adolescents and adults and volunteered with peace groups until she found the precise nature of her calling (Japenga, 1986). This was to work for the entire peace picture: "peace among nations, peace among groups, peace within our environment, peace among individuals, and the very, very important inner peace — ...because that is where peace begins" (Peace Pilgrim, 1982, p. 25).

Preparation

Looking back on her life she said that she felt she was preparing for her mission

even as a child, without knowing what she was preparing for. She chose to follow the principle "first things first." In high school, she refused to drink and to smoke and when pressured by her friends she said to them, "Look, life is a series of choices and nobody can stop you from making your choices, but I have a right to make my own choices, too. And I have chosen freedom" (p. 4). She did not receive a religious upbringing, and yet at 16, as a senior in high school, she began to search for God asking, "What is God?" But nobody could tell her. Then she realized that we call "God" everything that is beyond our capacity, and this led her to look for him in the mysteries of nature, in love and kindness, in all things good and beautiful. Intuitively she understood "beyond all doubt" that "God is a creative force, a motivating power, an over-all intelligence, an ever-present all-pervading spirit — which binds everything in the universe together and gives life to everything" (p. 2).

While engaged in ordinary living she made two important discoveries which brought her to the first critical point on her spiritual journey. This is how she told it:

In the first place I discovered that making money was easy. And in the second place I discovered that making money and spending it foolishly was completely meaningless. I knew that this was not what I was here for, but at that time . . . I didn't know exactly what I was here for.
[p. 4]

As I looked about the world, so much of it impoverished, I became increasingly uncomfortable about having so much while my brothers and sisters were starving. Finally I had to find another way. The turning point came when, in desperation and out of a very deep seeking for a meaningful way of life, I walked all one night through the woods. I came to a moonlit glade and prayed. I felt a complete willingness, without any reservations, to give my life -- to dedicate my life -- to service. "Please, use me!" I prayed to God. And a great peace came over me. I tell you, it's a point of no return. After that, you can never go back to completely self-centered living. [p. 7]

This decisive moment was an act of will and of surrender. She called it "the first hump of no return." A new phase opened: "And so I went into the second phase of my life. I began to live to give what I could, instead of to get what I could, and I entered a new and

wonderful world. My life began to become meaningful" (p. 7).

Unshakable Inner Peace

In the 15 years that followed, she worked with emotionally disturbed people. It was a period of inner conflict between the lower self and the higher self — the self-centered nature struggling with the God-centered nature, to start living what she believed. It was "lots of hills and valleys." She said that the inner conflict can be stormy, but that hers was "about medium." "Then in the midst of the struggle there came a wonderful mountain-top experience, and for the first time I knew what inner peace was like. I felt a oneness — oneness with all my fellow human beings, oneness with all of creation. I have never felt really separate since." This was, she said, her first peak experience, "a glimpse of inner peace." No doubt Maslow would regard her earlier "hump of no return" as a peak experience, but apparently to her nothing less than true inner peace, an illumination, would qualify.

"I could return again and again to this wonderful mountaintop, and then I could stay there for longer and longer periods of time, and just slip out occasionally. Then came a wonderful morning when I woke up and knew that I would never have to descend again into the valley. I knew that for me the struggle was over, that finally I had succeeded in giving my life, or finding inner peace. Again this is a point of no return. You can never go back into the struggle. The struggle is over now because you will to do the right thing, and you don't need to be pushed into it." [Peace Pilgrim, n.d., p. 2]

This was the attainment of complete inner peace, her spiritual birthday, a time when she was merged with the whole: "No longer was I a seed buried under the ground but I felt as a flower reaching out effortlessly toward the sun." On that day she had a vision of her mission. She saw a map of America with lines drawn in zigzag between cities from Los Angeles to New York: her first pilgrimage across the country on foot to arouse people to work for peace.

The Phases of Spiritual Growing

In her talks she drew on the blackboard a diagram to illustrate her spiritual journey (Figure 1). The first phase is depicted as the endless ups and downs of ordinary living, with occasional glimpses from the higher nature but without much upward trend. She drew the ups and downs of small amplitude probably to convey that our changeable emotional states do not reach higher consciousness. At the point of being willing to make one's life meaningful, to serve a higher purpose, the struggle begins between the lower and the higher self. True inner conflict is on and we are deep into Dabrowski's Level III at its most intense. It may go on for years, or lifetimes; it took Peace 15 years. Resolution of the conflict precipitates a decisive moment— an indelible, transforming peak experience, after which there is no more struggle — perhaps a slight wobble from not yet being steady on the new level — as Peace noted, slipping out occasionally. She said that in this phase she felt the occasional loss of inner peace more acutely than before. In the previous phase the valleys were normal living, what one is used to, while the hills were wonderful elevations of consciousness. But here, in Peace Pilgrim's sublime version of Dabrowski's level IV, such new dimensions opened up and there was such a new and intense way of feeling that to slip out of that perfect inner state caused great distress. Finally, Peace became permanently established in the state of inner peace, and even then, she assured us, inner growth continues. The progress is now harmonious, with no risk of slipping out (level V). One is now in control of one's life because it is one's higher self that is fully in charge. This is how she described this state: "There is a feeling of always being surrounded by all of the good things, like love, and peace, and joy. It seems like a protective surrounding, and there is an unshakeableness within which takes you through any situation you may need to face There is a calmness and a serenity and unhurriedness — no more striving or

straining" (pp. 22-23). And there is an endless supply of energy. She remarked that, when she spoke, energy flowed through her "like electricity flows through a wire."

In one of her videotaped talks, she quoted a psychologist who told her that the phases of her spiritual growth can be related to frameworks of different psychologists. The first phase, which is that of ordinary, mostly instinctual living, is ruled by Freud, the second with the hills and valleys of large amplitude is ruled by Adler (the struggle to make working for the good of others the focus of one's life), the third phase is ruled by Maslow (peak experiences and self-actualization) and Jung (completion of individuation) and the final by Erich Fromm (the way of love). One can, of course, argue with this interpretation. Although Adler did emphasize in his concept of "social interest" (*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*) that emotional health depends on getting away from being self-centered and instead contributing to the welfare of others, he said nothing about inner conflict between the lower and the higher self. To place Jung after Maslow is a mistake. We have from Maslow a detailed description of self-actualizing people (Maslow, 1970). One of the achievements of self-actualization is the resolution of dichotomies. What were opposites are opposites no more, e.g., work and play, the feminine and the masculine, being mature and being childlike. Jung's concept of individuation emphasizes a reconciliation of opposites, which has a different meaning from Maslow's resolution of dichotomies. The added difficulty with properly placing the construct of individuation is that no detailed case example of individuation is available. To Jung, "individuation" meant that all the opposites and polarities are embodied together but they are still discordant. The fact that all are equally emphasized means that the shadow archetype is still present (Monte, 1987). But in self-actualizing people as we know them, and we do know them well, there is hardly any shadow left.

Self-actualization is level IV, and if at that level a trace of shadow might be left, there is certainly no room for it in Dabrowski's Level V. Peace Pilgrim's unshakable inner peace contains no shadow, only limitless love.

The Way of War vs. the Way of Peace

Peace Pilgrim's approach is of utter simplicity. Everything is stripped to its pure essentials. The basic conflict in the world, she said, is not between nations but between two opposing beliefs: the way of war vs. the way of peace. The way of war is the belief that violence can be controlled by violence, an unworkable belief because evil cannot be overcome with more evil, only with good. The goal is to stop physical violence so that we can then concentrate on stopping psychological violence which exists in many forms of conflict and hate: litigations, verbal abuse, wishing ill on others, harboring ill-feeling, and so on. Our goal, in every instance, ought to be to resolve the conflict rather than to win. This is not always easy to recognize, especially when one feels in the right. But this is what peacemaking is about, and Peace Pilgrim rejoiced in the growth and strength of the peace movement and of peoples' awareness that the future of mankind could be secured only through world peace. Her own position was this:

I have extended my pacifism to include non-use of psychological violence as well as non-use of physical violence. Therefore I no longer become angry. I not only do not say angry words, I do not even think angry thoughts! If there were those who hated me, I would love them in return, knowing that hatred can only be overcome with love, and knowing that there is good in all human beings that can be reached by a loving approach. Those who use the non-violent method without love may have difficulty. If you force people to do things your way without helping to transform them, the problem is not really solved. If you can remember that we are not really separate from one another it may increase your wish to transform instead of subdue. And to extend your pacifism to include non-use of psychological violence as well as non-use of physical violence.
[p. 112]

Peace Pilgrim's program of spiritual development consists of 12 steps: four preparations, four purifications, and four relinquishments. They are not taken up in

any prescribed order. Among the relinquishments is that of the feeling of separateness:

We are all cells in the body of humanity. We are not separate from our fellow humans. . . . It's only from that higher viewpoint that you can know what it is to love your neighbor as yourself. From that higher viewpoint there becomes just one realistic way to work, and that is for the good of the whole. As long as you work for your selfish little self, you're just one cell against all those other cells, and you're way out of harmony. But as soon as you begin working for the good of the whole, you find yourself in harmony with all of your fellow human beings. You see, it's the easy harmonious way to live. [pp. 18-19]

Peace Pilgrim was for quick relinquishment. To her it was the easier, faster, and more economic way: "The path of gradual relinquishment of things hindering spiritual progress is a difficult path, for only when relinquishment is complete do the rewards really come. The path of quick relinquishment is an easy path, for it brings immediate blessings. And when God fills your life, God's gifts overflow to bless all you touch" (p. 21).

At one point in her pilgrimage she undertook a 45-day fast as a prayer discipline, in order to stay concentrated on her prayer for peace. As a result, her prayer consciousness became a continuous unbroken state: "I learned to pray without ceasing. I made the contact so thoroughly that into my prayer consciousness I put any condition or person in the world I am concerned about and the rest takes place automatically" (p. 73). To intervene, to help, to heal, she reached out: "my divine nature reaches out — to contact their divine nature. Then I have a feeling of lifting them, lifting them, lifting them, and I have the feeling of bringing God's life to them. I try to envision them bathed in God's light, and finally I do see them standing and reaching out their arms bathed in golden light. At that point I leave them in God's hands" (p. 73). Armed this way she was able to face even dangerous people. To her no one was evil, only psychologically sick, because she had nothing but the deepest compassion for them. She was never harmed except once when she was hit by a violent adolescent, but then, her loving acceptance of

his blows served to heal him: he was never violent again.

The following incident illustrates how totally secure and free of fear she was. She was walking in the middle of the night through the California desert. It was cold. No traffic and no cars for miles except for one car parked by the roadside. The driver called to her to get in and to get warm. She got in and looked at the man. "He was a big burly man — what most people would have called a rough looking individual. After we had talked a while he said, 'Say, wouldn't you like to get a few winks of sleep?' And I said, 'Oh, yes, I certainly would!' And I curled up and went to sleep. When I awoke I could see the man was very puzzled about something, and after we had talked for quite some time he admitted that when he had asked me to get into the car he had certainly meant me no good, adding, 'When you curled up so trustingly, and went to sleep, I just couldn't touch you!' " (p. 31).

Supreme Self-Awareness

She described who she was: "This clay garment is one of a penniless pilgrim journeying in the name of peace. It is what you cannot see that is so very important. I am one who is propelled by the power of faith; I bathe in the light of eternal wisdom; I am sustained by the unending energy of the universe; this is who I really am!" (p. 126). She described her mission: "My appointed work is to awaken the divine nature that is within. This is my calling, to open doors of truth and make people think, to arouse others from their apathetic and lethargic state, and get them to seek out for themselves the inner peace which dwells within" (p. 128). Again and again she stressed the supreme effectiveness of service: "The motive, if you are to find inner peace, must be an outgoing motive. Service, of course, service. Giving, not getting The secret of life is being of service" (p. 17).

The whole purpose of Maslow's search for self-actualizing people was to find those

individuals whose moral judgment we can trust. Peace Pilgrim is that and much more. To her, hurting others is not justified even in war or self-defense. She once faced a man intent on beating — even killing — a little girl, by stepping in front of him filled with nothing but compassion for him as for someone who was very very sick. He stopped and looked at her for a long time, with what expression we do not know, and turned away. But she was certain that if she tried force against him, he would have killed them both.

To do our psychological duty we ask, "Does she fulfill the criteria for level V?" which we can counter with, "Does level V meet the criteria for who she was?" To both questions the answer is yes, and while a detailed analysis to present evidence systematically would be worthwhile, it is beyond the scope of this paper.

ASHLEY — AN UNCOMPROMISING SEARCH FOR PERFECTION

Ashley is a woman in her forties, divorced with two children. She teaches at a university and leads, unknown to others, a life of silent preparation. Significant inner transformations took place in the four years between her first and last report: the beginning of deep inner peace, growth of detachment and inner freedom, and the realization of the true nature of who she is. These changes exemplify in the clearest way Peace Pilgrim's "Steps Toward Inner Peace" as well as Dabrowski's concept of the growing power of the inner magnet he called Personality Ideal.

Preparation

In Peace Pilgrim's terms there is in Ashley an ever strong purification of motive, purification of desire, purification of the body, and purification of thought. Purification of thought, which is the elimination of any negative thought, is the one area in which Ashley had to put up a great effort, to cease being extremely critical and impatient with people over their weaknesses and inharmonious ways of operating. In terms of relinquishments, in particular renouncing the idea of separateness, Ashley had long understood that mankind is one, all connected, that we all are cells in one body of humanity. But while this knowledge exists as a fundamental concept she has not yet translated it into what Peace Pilgrim saw in everyone — their divine nature, everyone as a shining light and therefore unconditionally worthy of love and compassion. Ashley is still very much affected by the inharmonious field enclosing a person's divine nature, the envelope of unglorious motives, negative thoughts, and petty desires. But she did reach some time ago a point of profound realization that she must do no harm even in thought. She said this was the hardest thing she ever attempted because it meant refraining from negative thoughts about others while at the same time being painfully aware of their defects and negativity. Thus, the relinquishment of the feeling of

separateness is still in process.

The relinquishment of all attachments has been accomplished. The last bond is with her children which will hold until they are on their own. The children are cherished, and feel loved and valued while being raised to think for themselves and to develop their character. Ashley has reached a point of inner certainty of who she is and what is the future direction of her life. The relinquishment of self-will is possible only when one has a strongly developed will. Only then can it be used to achieve goals of one's choosing. Ashley's will is powerful and clearly focused. With the relinquishment of all desires, ambitions, and attachments, she has surrendered her will to a higher purpose, to serve as a teacher and to raise consciousness above the level of separateness.

In terms of preparations, Ashley certainly has what Peace Pilgrim calls the right attitude toward life. She meets everything that comes her way as a problem to solve, a task to fulfill. From every event and every mistake she extracts a lesson. She does not dwell on past mistakes but examines them until she understands what is there for her to learn so as not to repeat it. For instance, she kept reviewing the years of her marriage until she understood everything in the incompatibility and conflict with which that relationship was fraught. Ashley continues to do everything to bring her life into harmony with the laws that govern this universe. She has found her special place in the Life Pattern. She has simplified her life to the necessary minimum of what is needed to provide for her children and to fulfill her work obligations to the utmost of her ability with no extras (bonuses, status, or privileges) because none are desired.

Ashley divided her life into two phases: an extroverted, hedonistic youth and a strongly introverted adulthood. She reported two significant memories of her childhood. One illustrates how strong her conscience was from the very start. She did something that offended her parents very deeply. They did not punish her and retired for the night.

Eight-year old Ashley could not sleep. Her conscience tortured her until she went and burst into her parents' bedroom sobbing to beg their forgiveness. Only then she could sleep. The second memory, also from age 8, was her realization that she was different, that she was in a world in which she was not at home. She found herself in a clump of young trees through which sunlight was filtering, and she felt a desperate desire to die because this was not where she belonged, beautiful though it was. In all her life she never had any fear of death, knowing somehow that it was a state of transition not unlike sleep.

She was an extremely active child and wild in her youth, in which time she experienced "the high of the body" which was, as in Etty's case, not the pursuit of pleasure, but a sensuality living out of her intense vitality. It was sensuality "with an extreme sense of aesthetics to it." In time this gave way to "the high of the mind, "the great joy found in the world of ideas.

Transformation of Inner Contradictions

In the first report Ashley describes herself as a "fabric of contradictions and powerful urges," of antinomies not integrated into a harmonious whole: "I have strong needs, strong desires, strong goals and I am not sure I can manage all this. I am a monk and at the same time an actor [i.e., a person of action]. I am torn between the urge for contemplation and the urge for direct action. I have strong power instincts and I despise power. I have a deep need for security and at the same time I know I could gamble it all. I am full of life and I love death. . . . I can be extremely tolerant for the big things and nit-picking and critical for the little things. . . . I love humanity and I cannot stand people. . . . I am the image of the world I live in." This made her like a yo-yo, she said. At that time her inner conflict was between impatience for action and a feeling that everything was as it should be, between being supercritical of others and wanting to be

patient and forbearing. There was also the level-III typical lack of self-acceptance, a strong dissatisfaction with herself: "I hate the fact that I am so flawed."

At the same time strong transformational forces were at work, and these were by far the more dominant. She simplified her life by divesting herself of emotional entanglements, by happily leading the life of a celibate, and by focusing on her Bodhisattva ideal — a person who, having transcended the ego and found liberation in higher consciousness, dedicates himself or herself to helping others until they, too, are liberated.

One of the characteristics of self-actualizing people and those engaged in transforming growth (levels III and IV) is their openness to learning from others who have something to teach them. Ashley was not affected by negative opinions of those who saw her as distant, not a joiner, because she was aware that these people did not understand her; at the same time she felt no need to try to win their favors. But she was always open to learning from those whom she could trust to give her honest response because they knew her and because it would help her grow.

In the two years between the first and the second report significant changes took place. She became less judgmental toward others. To her, who was always so supercritical and perfectionistic, this was a monumental change. She realized that even a thought that is negative does harm. Therefore, she decided to follow the principle of doing no harm in thought, word, or action: "This is the hardest thing that I have ever attempted to do. It requires constant attention, vigilance, deliberation, and consciousness. . . . What I hope is that this active deliberate abstention from the negative will eventually lead to an active participation in the positive." This inner work is an excellent example of the process of transformation. She explained: "it is not that I am losing that super-critical sense that makes me pick every little flaw in a minute;

unfortunately that ability is still there. But what happens now is that I register the information, realize that it indicates more about me than about the other person, set out to understand what it says about me and see if there is something I can do about it."

The doubts that existed before have now disappeared; inner conflict has ceased and the inner contradictions have resolved themselves; there are no particular desires — only the focus on her inner goal. Emotionally she began to live on two levels. On the surface, she continued to be irritated and frustrated with everyday things when they departed from her sense of order, clarity, and efficiency. On the fundamental level she felt deep peace, still and unmovable, a part of her that was absolutely unconcerned and unaffected by what happened on the surface. Ashley reached a level of unshakable certainty.

With this came greater self-acceptance: "I am very aware of how flawed I am. . . . The important point is not to moan and groan about my precise lack of abilities, talents, personal qualities, etc. The important point is to take stock, to be thankful for what I already have and to try to pick up what I do not have Every effort that I make now toward more tolerance, more patience, etc., will produce fruit down the road."

The Bodhisattva Ideal

Ashley's image for this phase of her life is that she started clearing her cupboards. Just like old people put their house in order before entering the portals to another life, so she became more free of things, attachments, and feelings that bind. Her personal Bodhisattva ideal became more clearly defined: "To live impeccably, to practice harmlessness, to serve humanity." Refining herself on the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels became much more planned and deliberate.

She had a vision of what she will be: a leader, in the future, serving humanity to develop new consciousness of cooperation, sharing, and being a true community. To serve this next step in our evolution (yes, ours: yours, mine and the rest) she relinquished her self-will in an act of surrender to a higher will. She saw that her strengths — self-direction, self-reliance, will, independence — would not have a place in the family of mankind once understanding, good will and cooperation became the order of the day.

A year later, in her third report, even more profound changes are described. Her body became more youthful with such a tremendous influx of energy that it would have been difficult to control it without vigorous daily exercise. Her previous detachment became "planned withdrawal" into deeper silence and solitude. Her mind became so focused that when she withdrew attention from something — an old habit, a desire, a problem — it ceased to exist for her. Paradoxically, her teaching became even more strongly engaged; her feelings and emotions reached a new level of intense aliveness; at the same time her acute sensitivity to the "transmissions" of irritation, resentment, envy, and conflict emanating from others increased to the point that at times they caused her "to run for cover."

These deep, extraordinary transformations demand profound inner concentration that can only be gained in inner silence. She cherished her silence more and more. The ideal of service was being perfected: "This is the way I want it: belonging nowhere so I may serve anywhere. I want to be free, detached and work where I am sent. Work is my way of loving." In this phase her understanding of her inner growth reached a point that she could say: "I have heard the voice of my soul." The following year she was able to say, "I know who I am, " and, in her case, one can trust that indeed she does know.

A Solitary Path

She understood that her path, unlike Etty's but more like Peace Pilgrim's, is the path of one who glories in detachment, who has the strength to stand alone, who belongs to no one except God, who loves through working for others rather than pouring out love to others.

Does Ashley seek anything for herself? No. Her only desire is to follow her inner path to the best of her abilities, which are considerable. She is a highly gifted person, intellectually and otherwise. Does her presence create a problem for other people? Most definitely. As a child she knew she was different from others. She also learned fast that anyone who is different is hated and despised. Her strong independence, sense of principle, and the personal power she exudes intimidate some people and have an unsettling effect on others, neither of which is her intention. People at a high level of development are not necessarily all sweetness, gentleness, and loving smiles. Maslow noticed this about self-actualizing people. They challenge us in ways that can make us uncomfortable because of the neglected potential buried in us. Peace Pilgrim, for instance, was quite outspoken regarding people who were as she said "surface-livers," who were enslaved by possessions, or held lifelong bitter grudges, which affected their health and arrested their inner growth. Those like Ashley, who follow a solitary path, can make us feel distanced. Yet it is our task to recognize them, cherish them, and benefit from their support and everything they have to offer. I believe that these people, whose motives are pure and whose only desire is to help others develop fully, are present among us in greater number than anyone suspects. Sinetar's (1986) study of ordinary people on the path toward self-actualization bears this out. Like Etty and Peace on the one hand and Ashley on the other, Sinetar found her subjects to follow either the path of compassion and mystic love or the path of solitude and silence.

Ashley's final report was very short. It was a note of explanation that "there was nothing more to write about; not because nothing is happening — far from that! — but because I seem to have reached a place of silence. I have nothing to say anymore." Ashley expressed gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to this research because it gave her "the privilege of committing to paper some of the powerful internal changes of my personal growth." The final line was: "I know who I am. 'I stand and serve' is my signature. There is no more to be said."

Ashley offers a close look at the inner changes in a person of very strong will and powerful intellect, who follows her inner ideal with unwavering consistency. Within four short years profound changes have taken place — a thorough process of purification and relinquishment. Ashley is well grounded in transpersonal consciousness. She was given a vision of the crisis point at which mankind is today, and of the next stage in humanity's evolution. Unlike dreams or imaginings of wishful thinking, these visions came with an unshakable certainty. Ashley's whole life is a preparation for this future kind of work, just like Peace Pilgrim's life was a preparation for her mission of peace.

CONCLUSION

Peace Pilgrim, Etty, and Ashley are extraordinary and unique individuals. I see their significance for us in the fact that they led ordinary lives, held no positions of prominence and had no religious training to speak of. Yet from within their inner being came a search for God and the realization of their destiny. All three responded to the desperate call of their brothers and sisters with a willingness to serve. They took up the task of preparation to fulfill their destiny, the fourfold preparations outlined by Peace Pilgrim: (1) taking up the right attitude toward life which is to see life's problems as opportunities for growth; (2) bringing their lives into harmony with the

laws that govern this universe; (3) finding one's special place in the Life Pattern; and (4) simplifying one's life so that one becomes free. All three have a sense of preparing themselves and being prepared for their mission. They all came to the firm conviction that the inner situation determines the outer situation, and that we each individually create our personal and collective reality. Etty and Ashley realized as well as Peace Pilgrim that we must not harm even in thought because thoughts are real, powerful, and, whether we know it or not, we emit their energy into our environment. All three share the transpersonal perspective of nonseparateness that we are all cells in the one body of humanity, that our lives and destinies are interconnected; and that the choices we make — for personal gain or for the good of the whole — shape the world situation toward war or toward peace. These are not ideas with which we grew up, and neither did they. They came upon them within the depth of their inner self, of which Etty said, "everything we need is within us."

NOTE 1. The following articles listed in the reference section offer an introductory overview of Dabrowski's theory: K. C. Nelson (1989), "Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration," and M. M. Piechowski (1991), "Emotional development and emotional giftedness."

NOTE 2. Ashley's reports were scored at level 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3, respectively, by the Miller method (Miller, 1985; Miller & Silverman, 1987). Scores for level IV extend from 3.6-4.5, consequently, Ashley's scores reflect a very advanced multilevel growth, clearly approaching level V. The scores themselves cannot reflect the profound changes that took place. Characteristically, and in agreement with Dabrowski's theory, the first report had a number of responses that were scored at level III. The last full report had none. I wish to thank Nancy Miller and Frank Falk for their loving labor of scoring. They remarked that of the 270 protocols available to them this was the highest-level material they have seen, and they found it quite uplifting.

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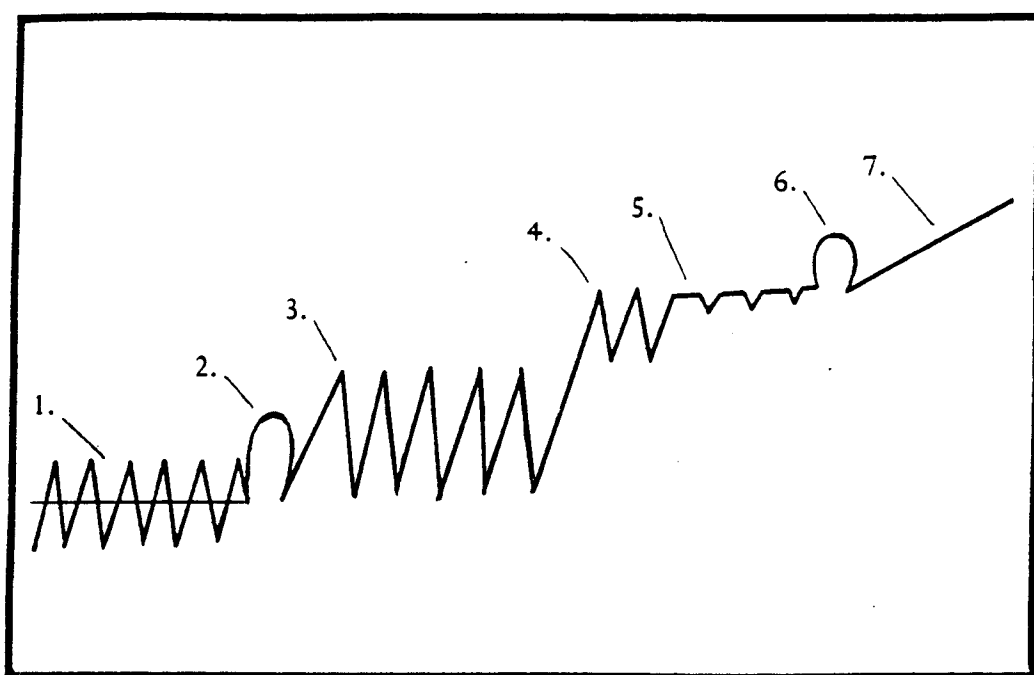
Table 1

LEVELS OF EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

V	Life inspired by a powerful ideal, e.g. equal rights, world peace, universal love and compassion, sovereignty of all nations <i>A magnetic field in the soul</i> - Dag Hammarskjöld
IV	Self-actualization; ideals and actions agree: "what ought to be, will be", strong sense of responsibility <i>Behind tranquility lies conquered unhappiness</i> - Eleanor Roosevelt
III	Sense of the ideal but not reaching it; moral concerns: higher vs. lower in oneself <i>Video meliora proboque deteriora sequor</i> - Marcus Tullius Cicero
II	Lack of inner direction; inner fragmentation - many selves; submission to the values of the group; relativism of values and beliefs <i>A reed in the wind</i> -
I	Dominant concern with self-protection and survival; self-serving egocentrism; instrumental view of others; <i>Dog-eat-dog</i> mentality

From Piechowski (1991)

Peace Pilgrim's Chart of Her Spiritual Growth



1. The ups and downs of emotion within the self-centered nature.
2. The first hump of no return: Complete willingness, without reservation, to give life to serve the higher will.
3. Battle between the God-centered nature and the self-centered nature.
4. First peak experience: A glimpse of inner peace.
5. Longer and longer plateaus of inner peace.
6. Complete inner peace.
7. Continuation of growth on a steadily upward path.

From Peace Pilgrim (1982), p. 137.

FIGURE 1