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MÁRIA KOPP – ÁRPÁD SKRABSKI

WAYS OF SEEKING HAPPINESS

FROM A MATURE PERSONALITY TO A BALANCED RELATONSHIP

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CONTENT

9

COMMUNITY OF LIFE
IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

25

COMMUNITY OF LIFE
IN FAMILY THERAPY

43

CHARACTER TRAITS REQUIRED
FOR COMMUNITY OF LIFE

61

THE ROLE OF GENDER
IN RELATIONSHIPS

77

DETERMING FACTORS
OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

105

DETERMINING FACTORS
OF QUALITY OF LIFE

125

A SUPPORTIVE FAMILY AS THE BASIS
OF POSITIVE QUALITY OF LIFE

153

WAYS AND LABYRINTHS
OF SEEKING HAPPINESS

176

AFTERWORD

182

REFERENCES

COMMUNITY OF LIFE IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

INTRODUCTION

In our national representative surveys conducted from the 1990s to the mid-2000s, we asked people which values they considered to be the most important. Most of them reported that their first and foremost value was happiness. (In the Hungarostudy 1988, Hungarostudy 1995, Hungarostudy 2002 and Hungarostudy 2006 surveys, we collected national-level representative data by gender, age and geographical region. 20,902 people were surveyed in 1988, 12,463 in 1995, 12,600 in 2002, and 4,841 in 2006).

The only naturally resulting question was, what do we mean by 'happiness'? Throughout Hungary's history, the slogans of collectivism have discredited even the most beautiful concepts such as "belonging" or "community". Consumer society took to defining and redefining terms and concepts. Freedom, for instance, (according to dictionary.com) originally meaning *the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants*, was redefined by consumer society to mean *being free from relationships.* The idea of happiness suffered a similar fate. Its original meaning, *the state of being happy*, was redefined by consumer society to mean something else, it is this new definition that is gaining popularity, carrying with it dire consequences for the gullible masses.

The consequences of such a 'concept of happiness' are easy to detect in Hungarian statistical data. To cite but one example, the mortality rate of single middle-aged men accounts for the largest share within the already extremely high mortality rate of the general Hungarian population.

Another tragic result of this kind of happiness is divorce. Movies and television series depict divorce as an easy escape from one's problems, yet they fail to show the profound unhappiness and the sense of being lost resulting from a marriage annulment. In particular, they ignore those hundreds of thousands of children who fall victim to their parents' divorce, and continue to carry the scars, pain (of having their trust breached), and negative patterns of bad decisions and behavior throughout their lives.

According to ancient philosophers happiness is not internal harmony dependent on external circumstances. In contrast, it is inner freedom, reciprocity, trust, reliability, genuine human relationships, goals and meaning in life. All are characteristic traits of a mature personality, albeit they obviously manifest in different forms and at different levels, depending on the person's age.

In our surveys, we also investigated those who feel 'happy' in Hungarian society, or, to be more precise, those who reported they could always handle difficulties. We found that more people felt this way in the upper levels of social strata. However, there were also many people who considered themselves "happy" among those over 60 years of age who had completed only eight grades or less in primary school and could barely afford even the most basic goods.

We analysed the key characteristics of this group, and found that they consider themselves reliable, feel they can count on their spouses or parents for support in hard times, and still have goals in life. Regarding the most important values, the surveys conducted by Hungarian

demographer Tiborné Pongrácz evidence that Hungarian women consider the child to be their most important value, while, for instance, in the provinces that formerly belonged to East Germany, women emphatically prioritised career. According to our 1995 survey of the Hungarian population over the age of 16, true friendship ranked fifth on the list of values, comfortable life seventh, success only ninth, and pleasures surprisingly ranked sixteenth.

Psychiatrist László Tringer, in his 1992 study entitled *Ways and labyrinths of seeking happiness,* published in the periodical Vigilia, says, 'We have little experience of the rare moments of happiness. Our imagination fails us when we try to picture the individual realisation of happiness. An artist depicts hell so much more colourfully than heaven. Dante's *Inferno* is so much more pleasurable to read than his *Paradiso*. The search for happiness also entails the search for the definition of happiness. The concept refers to human existence as a whole, and is fundamentally related to the person who experiences it. Therefore, a universal concept of happiness that pertains to everyone can only be of a philosophical and theological nature. The diffuse desire for happiness can be described by concrete ideas, and manifests in the real world. It is quite possible, a happy person is someone who comes up with a definition of happiness that he or she finds valid and attainable.' We think that it is worth applying the apt title of László Tringer's paper to relationships as well.

According to Aristotle's definition, true happiness is not simply a mood or a state, but a constant effort or striving. Mankind is distinguished from animals by its

shared values, that is, virtues, such as wisdom, knowledge, courage, love, humaneness, justice, moderation, spirituality and the experience of transcendence. And these values make us humans happy. In fact, the search for the purpose and meaning of life is the very essence of happiness. If this is what we prioritise, then we will be able to live a full, harmonious, "wholesome/healthy" life, even if we lose everything (e.g. material possessions, health).

COMMUNITY OF LIFE OR COMMUNITY OF INTEREST

Historically, it was a common practice to make marriage contracts on the basis of economic or political interests. Rulers used family ties to strengthen political alliances, and the well-to-do sought to increase their wealth through the unification of assets in.

Even nowadays, the ability to strengthen each other's social status is an important factor when choosing a partner. To ensure that both persons benefit, a compromise of some sort is reached regarding the individual gains and concessions in the relationship. A vivid example of this is the traditional structure of marriage, where the husband is the breadwinner, being responsible for the family's financial standing. The wife is to bear and nurture children, and run the household.

An interest-based partnership like this can become a real community of life, but it is not obliged to do so. Yet, in many cases, the partners fail to achieve such an organic unity. In a partnership, the partner is not the means needed

for the individual to thrive, but rather is an end in him-/herself transcending the individual. As in many folk tales, people are happy to make a sacrifice to achieve something new or hold on to an already won treasure. It is doubtless that for centuries, marriage has been based on interest. However, real community of life within marriage were also considered favourable, and were thus set as an example to be followed by spouses-to-be. Since classical antiquity, there have been examples of lasting cummunities of life, one of the best-known being that of Pharaoh Ikhnaton and his wife Nefertiti. There are other marriages that are a good example of the community of life, such matrimonies were of historical significance centuries ago, and still serve as examples today.

One such community of life is the marriage of Malcolm III and Margaret, who was presumably a relative of Saint Stephen, King of Hungary. Sándor Fest discusses her life in his book *From Saint Margaret of Scotland to the bards of Wales*. He spoke of how Malcolm, the King of Scots loved his wife truly and deeply.

Their story is very much like a fairytale – particularly the story of their first meeting. The heir to the English throne had to flee England because of a power struggle; he (then named Edward the Exile) was received by Saint Stephen. Edward married Agatha, the king's daughter. Their daughter, Margaret was born in Hungary. She received an excellent early education; she even learnt to read, write and speak foreign languages, which was rare at the time. When Edward was summoned back to England, the family returned together, but given the hostility and

military conflicts in England, Margaret decided to flee back to Hungary. On their way home, their ship was hit by a storm and they were stranded in Scotland.

Malcolm III, King of Scots, a widower, had already been acquainted with Margaret and wanted to marry her. Margaret and Malcolm had a happy and successful marriage. Chronicles relate that Margaret would read to her illiterate husband, who then gilded every single book she used. They are also remembered her for her work in organizing the Scottish state fashioning it after the Hungarian state's model, and in introducing Roman Catholicism and liturgy to Scotland.

Another beautiful element of the story is that Margaret and Malcolm died within days of each other: Malcolm fell in battle, and, Margaret died soon after hearing the devastating news. They were buried together. Later, during a time of conflicts, efforts were made to take Margaret's coffin away, but legend has it that no one could move it until Malcolm's coffin was also moved. Afterwards, both bodies were transported to Spain to save them from the ravaging wars.

The example of Margaret and Malcolm shows that, even in the Middle Ages, a husband and a wife could establish a community of value and life. It also proves that a woman could be successful not only as a home-maker but also as a public figure. It is also to be noted that husband and wife could work together and even make an impact on society as a whole.

A HIGHER PLANE OF EXISTENCE IN MARRIAGE

According to J. G. Holmes, the internationally renowned researcher of social psychology, 'positive illusions' plays a critical role in strengthening marital relationships. It can be observed that married persons have a much more favourable view of their partners than others do or than even the partners themselves. They see their partners as perfect and unique, and they are certain about their love toward the other. Being loved, or, more precisely, feeling loved is an essential part of a relationship. Feeling loved offers a safety reserve, a buffer or a resource in the stressful situations life can bring the married couple's way.

Holmes argues that a positive illusion evolves in good marriages. Let us consider an elderly couple walking slowly down the street, hand in hand. They may not mean much to passers-by, yet to one another, they mean the world. In their case, it must be noted that illusion does not mean that their perception of each other other is completely detached from reality. Rather, the two of them, forming a community, represent a new 'configuration' from the perspective of Gestalt psychology, and together they become something more than what they could become separately. In their joint form (where they establish a life community), they actually mean much more to each other than what they, as two individuals, seem to be in the eyes of outside observers.

For every person who lives in a community of life, the weakening or disintegration of the relationship poses danger. To protect the relationship, they modify their initial idea of the ideal partner, adapting it to their partner's actual traits. Dependence on an imperfect partner entails major risks. To reduce such risk, the individual must minimise the partner's faults and compare them with the traits which are considered excellent, thus allowing the benefits to easily outweigh the shortcomings. The lesson learned from relational models is that people feel secure about their partners if they are positively assessed by them. An English opinion poll actually showed that women find a man to be an ideal husband if he finds them ideal. Such a positive evaluation leads to praising the partner, strengthening his or her identity, which, in turn, has an impact on personality development. Reinforcing the partner's self-identity reinforces the very traits desired by the spouse.

A possible reason why married persons see their partners more positively lies in the Gestalt nature of a relationship. "Form" (Gestalt) is a psychological term; it denotes an existence that is more than the sum of its parts. For example, a car is more than simply a collection of its parts. This is an apt but misleading analogy, given that in mechanical structures (or in a large company or the military) parts, elements and even persons can be replaced at any time. In contrast, in a community of life both individuals are unique and unrepeatable, which means that albeit a community of life is a Gestalt as far as form is concerned, it is of a higher quality.

As mentioned above, the extra value created by a community of life is not directly perceivable to outsiders. People who value themselves realistically, when they find a partner, they do not only become connected and attached, they rise to a higher plane of existence (so to speak) by the Gestalt nature of the romantic relationship. This higher plane of existence is the community of life which is, rightly, attributed to the partner. Therefore, the partner represents a reality beyond, who makes the world a more colourful place, and whom the partner loves above all else. As a close relative said when she heard that her husband had died: "How grey the world has become!". Or as Hungarian performing artists Géza Bereményi and Tamás Cseh say very aptly in their *Love Song* (from the single *Songs of the Full Moon*):

"Your rich body offers everything to me,
but I only long for your face ever, ever."

The extra value represented by the community of life as a higher plane of existence can be described or represented with the concepts of Jung's or Erikson's psychology. Jung compares the human personality to a sphere lit by a source of light. The surface lit is the conscious part, called *ego*, while the unconscious part is called *shadow*. Our Self (Selbst) is at the centre of the sphere; it is our potentially perfect state. German-American psychoanalyst Erik H. Erikson describes personality development as a series of crises which can be resolved by becoming aware of some

parts of the shadow. We approach or reach this Self as we are bringing more and more of our shadow under conscious control.

Jung holds that the perfect state is approaching God, who keeps human beings in existence and is always present to them. The representations of our "self" are the symbols of God (cross, square, circle). Members of a community can also approach Selbst through compensating for each other's shadow. When it comes to management theories, they state, among other things, that the cooperation of people with different personality types contributes to highly efficient leadership in organisations. The reason for this is that the shortcomings of some group members can be counterbalanced by the strengths of others. Of course, it is not an easy task to keep such a highly heterogeneous group together.

Another element of Jung's model is the *persona*, a part of the ego, or a mask the person shows to others (masculine in nature for men and feminine for women). In the unconscious realm represented by the shadow and as a reflection of the *persona*, the totality of unconscious feminine traits (*anima*) in men and masculine traits (*animus*) in women are contained. In a successful relationship, the man corresponds to the woman's *animus*, and the woman corresponds to the man's *anima*. The community of life allows them to approach their joint Self, – complementing each other –which, in turn, takes them to a higher plane of existence. This gives the community of transcendent aspect. We might say, there is some similarity between the evolution of a community of life

and formation of the atomic bond, that is, the formation of a molecule. In a community of life, the partner appears as a carrier of transcendence or as having god-like qualities, because such a community enables both individuals to approach Selbst.

The Jungian model is also suitable for the presentation of the relationship between love and the community of life. Subconsciously, every man is looking for his *anima* in a woman, and every woman for her *animus* in a man. Thus, everybody is inclined to project their *anima* or *animus* onto a man or a woman. When the real qualities of the significant other fail to match those projected on him or her by the partner, then both parties lose. Love, when based on projection only, is followed by disenchantment. However, when love is properly substantiated, it can provide a solid foundation for a community of life.

COMPLEMENTARITY

To resolve the contradiction in the definition of marriage, it must be clarified whether marriage is essentially considered to be community of interest or a community of life. We must ask ourselves: if we consider it a community of life, do we realise that this community is so much more than the two partners separately? We cannot possess the community of life; we can only become part of it. Those who want to own their partners and their relationships are unfit for a community of life; they can only create a community of interest.

A true, lasting community of life can only exist between two individuals. This irreplaceability is a special characteristic in the relationship. For religious people, this can be traced back to the fact that all people are created by God and with this act he creates a special personal relationship between himself and his creation. The basis for this community is unconditional, mutual acceptance. Both spouses must prefer the other before him-/herself, and be willing to sacrifice for relationship if needed. In other words, total commitment is essential. In such an alliance (unlike in a community of interest) the husband and the wife cannot be replaced by another man or woman.

Why is it that some seek personal relationships, while others opt only for a relationship of interest? Erikson says that the first two years of a newborn baby's life are unperturbed, happy times to bond with the mother. A baby, adds Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung, is always a "miracle child of the divine mother", which shares a unique, and unbreakable bond with his or her mother. This bond, called "early attachment", is the same one that a person seeks later, when looking for someone to marry, with whom they can settle down. According to Erikson's theory, disorders of early childhood development account for seeking interest-based personal relationships rather than inseparable, deep relationships. Such disorders, however, are not to be considered as an unchangeable status, because, says Erikson, every failure can be corrected in the process of personality development.

Our self-identity means that we are at home in society, in the world, in the universe. In a community of life, this

kind of "feeling at home" refers to coexistence. In such a community, the tight-knit bond between partners causes the home itself to seem empty in the absence of one of the married persons. Still, the house, even in the worst of times and conditions might be filled with light, love, and comfort provided that the married couple maintains the relationship with each other. According to the Catholic Church, this form of conjugal community of life is sacramental marriage (or marriage of alliance), which is to be differentiated from contractual marriage. In the latter, based on compromises that both parties find beneficial, the community of life described above does not evolve. Obviously, the religious ceremony is not a necessary precondition for the establishment of a community of life between two persons. Yet Christian denominations use ethical rules (based in Scripture), the affirmation of sacramental marriage, and related acts or rites. These help believers to see the divine aspect of marriage.

That which is described in science with Gestalt, Jungian or positive psychology is interpreted by Christian churches as the special presence of God in marriage. It is God who creates people and binds them together, giving them the gift of each other's company and sustaining them. Christian churches help individuals recognise and experience the reality of a community of life in their relationship. This approach is based on the creation narrative, according to which God created mankind, creating them to be man and woman. It is also to be mentioned that if someone engages in sex without the intention of creating a community of life, then they make it more difficult for both themselves

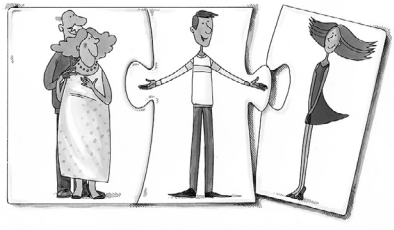
and their partners to enter into a community of life with another person later. Statistical data show that those who live together before marriage are more likely to divorce compared to those who do not live together before marriage. Obviously, a long premarital relationship without sexual intercourse is a sacrifice, but it only reinforces the couple's commitment. The trial is a common motif in folktales. The initiation ceremonies of primitive peoples (or the initiation of freshmen at universities, recruits in the military or sailors) are based on a similar principle to deepen commitment. By prohibiting premarital sex, the Church protects and strengthens the commitment that is necessary for forming a strong unit within the confines of marriage. A preconditions of a community of life are mutual trust and security in the other's commitment; otherwise the partnership will not be created.

J. G. Holmes opines that the lack of positive thinking may lead to divorce. Unable to entertain positive thoughts, the spouses create an expanding list of each other's mistakes. Doing so, they actually hold each other accountable for their own interpretation of a compromise-based contract. A contractual marriage can also be destabilised by the potential appearance of a third party who offers more favourable conditions. In such cases, the former relationship may dissolve.

In today's neoliberal world, many take this approach natural to urge parties reaching a favourable contract, that on the other hand can be dissolved with minimum losses and in that case, to seek a more suitable partner afterwards. This approach fails to take into account the fact that

the losses incurred in divorce are severe. Regardless of a person's worldview, this is the tragic reality of divorces to be witnessed in divorces of friends or acquaintances.

COMMUNITY OF LIFE IN FAMILY THERAPY



THE SECRET OF LASTING MARRIAGES

Having studied thousands of cases, U.S. relationship experts Gay Hendricks and Kathlyn Hendricks list five secrets to lasting marriages. They are as follows:

1. total commitment,
2. emotional transparency,
3. breaking the circle of blame and criticism,
4. releasing creative energies,
5. becoming a master of verbal and non-verbal appreciation.

TOTAL COMMITMENT

The authors hold that commitment is fundamental to the evolution of lasting, growing, living and conscious relationships. Therefore, if you want to live in a community of life, you must commit yourself in various ways. A result of this process is that you will find your own social identity, because identity or knowing who you are is equal to being committed to your newfound place in society. Nowadays, many strive to be free of any commitment at all; they neither seek a lasting relationship nor a domestic partnership, for they are unfit for it.

Many psychologists discuss the types of compromises people make before marriage. A compromise is supposed to entail mutual renunciation; by contrast, our experience shows that the essence of the alliance between two individuals is fulfilment, achieving more together than separately. A key element of a community of life is mutual

full commitment, where the partners say, "I want to live in a lasting relationship with you. For that, I am willing to make any sacrifice." Obviously, commitment can take many forms, and every couple chooses their own unique, individual form. Many relationships are unstable, however, because at least one partner is not fully committed. This is where family therapy can help solidify relationships. In family therapy practice, couples are asked, after careful consideration and with full awareness of the seriousness of their actions, to verbally commit themselves to their relationship, to each other. For them, this marks the beginning of a new kind of relationship.

Unfortunately, the initial conscious commitment can later be hindered by many unconscious psychological constraints. Such constraints include, parental interference in the relationship, surfacing internalised patterns of behavior and unspoken prejudices previously hidden during the dating and courting periods, differences in worldview, the partner's family background, and opposing ideas about career choices or home ownership. Such ideals and thoughts need to be explored. An individual who truly strives for a community of life must make be willing to lay down or give up certain thoughts or preferences if they endanger the integrity of the relationship.

The essence of the family therapy method of Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks is to help the married couple let go of anything that may hinder their commitment to each other. A pure heart can be defined as a system of coordinated commitments that are in harmony, free from any contradiction or ambiguity. Mutual commitment

transcends the boundaries of the relationship, and entails commitment to others as well, namely (due to the transcendent nature of the relationship) commitment to God. (For atheists, this may be a commitment to the creative forces of the universe). Through commitment, both individuals discover who they truly are. This discovery comes from two essential elements, living and experiencing married life together, and nurturing a relationship with God – seeking and knowing Him and His will and living in His constant presence. This commitment also means an eternal place in creation; their creative energies are at the service of this commitment - this is the happiness of the pure heart.

During a discussion, several young people said that they did not want to get married because they did not want to commit. Some of them pointed out that since they could not possibly know what they would want decades later, they felt that commitment could easily become a voluntary yet unbearable duress. When freedom is defined as the opportunity to choose freely, as much as possible, and to possess anything at any moment of our lives, then commitment may indeed seem like bondage. This is why many come to the conclusion that happiness equals freedom from any and all commitment. However, individuals who fail to commit live under the spell of innumerable conflicting desires. For them, freedom of choice means they can acquire (or exchange freely) the objects of their desires. For such individuals, both objects and personal relationships can be categorized as consumer goods. The frivolous and unhindered enjoyment of such

goods leads to utter loneliness, because such a person is not attached to anyone. (Being the ideal consumers, these "freedom chasers", who imagine themselves to be free of any ties, are in fact at the mercy of and enslaved to cleverly organised advertising campaigns and the madness of accumulation and consumption of things.)

In contrast to this short-term, pleasure-seeking mentality, U.S. psychologist Gordon Allport surmises that the most important characteristic of a mature personality to: (1) be able to set long-term goals, and (2) become part of one's social environment. Human beings of a mature personality recognise in the world a reality that transcends their own existence. Instead of making attempts to control it, they wish to serve it, uniting with creative forces. When a woman and a man love each other, they sense in each other a divine quality that surpasses their own existence, and value above all else the community of life that only the two of them can create. Commitment in this case means the attainment of a higher form of existence.

The creation of a community of life changes the world, so we may say it is a global event. Their marriage is created by their wilful entering into a covenant a drafted by God, as displayed in traditional Catholic matrimonial ceremony. This unity's divine aspect is portrayed through the presence of God's representative, and the wedding party, the family and friends attending the ceremony.

It is a telling fact that, according to Tiborné Pongrácz, at the start of the new millennium, 87.3% of the Hungarian population considered marriage to be the best form of living, and 58.2% of the total population (76.7% of young people)

approved of couples living together before marrying. In contrast, 29.1% of the total population (35.6% of married people) considered marriage without a prior cohabition to be good. Once the individuals feel that a community of life has been established between them, they can with a church wedding ceremony publicly declare their unity. It is good to know, however, that surveys show that those couples who do not live together before marrying are generally less likely to divorce. As shown by processed Hungarostudy databases, marital and non-marital partnerships cannot be regarded as identical in many respects (e.g. self-harming behaviours, abortion, violence, reliability etc.).

Commitment is a cohesive force for society as a whole. Consistency, that is, repeatedly following through on your commitments, is deeply ingrained in human nature. This holds true even when we say something without the intention of committing. The reason for this is that when we voluntarily state something, then it is most likely that we will act accordingly afterwards. If we make a written statement, then it elicits even stronger commitment. The highest level of commitment is shown by making a sacrifice. Such tests of commitment are seen in many places outside of marriage as well. Trials or initiations marked the advancement of officers in the army of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, of university students through their studies, and, in primitive-natural cultures, these rites also signalled passage into adulthood. In fairy tales, heroes underwent trials to win the hand of the princess. In the light of such ancient practices and rites, we should not be surprised that sexual abstinence before marriage is a

test that can bring about increased commitment. Sailors are also good examples to illustrate committed persons or communities. No matter how bad the wind is or how strong the storm, they, equipped with adequate knowledge and skills, keep the course until they arrive safely into port. Those who are not committed and simply want to enjoy a pleasant ride, when hit by a storm, will do anything just to survive and avoid shipwreck.

All things considered, commitment is more than just a global initiative. It affects the small group just as much as the large group or the individual. Commitment to the small group (and it likely the large group as well) means that every individual makes attempts to achieve the group's objectives putting aside their own personal goals, acting out of inner motivation to see the group succeed. Some come up with solutions to problems, while others implement them. There is no need for hierarchy, only for mutual respect and a commitment to a common purpose and goal.

If we are serious about building the kingdom of God in this world, then social commitment becomes closely related to commitment to God. At the same time, this approach creates a solid basis for us to cooperate wholeheartedly with people who, while they do not acknowledge God, are committed to building society up in positive way and ensuring others' well-being.

Christian family members share a common desire to find God in the events of family life, and to recognise that, in most cases, God does not communicate ambiguously using only wordsbut in clear ways perhaps even through life events to which we respond with decisions and actions. If we aim to identify with the creative powers of the world, that is, to fully submit to the Creator God, then we will no longer be determined by external forces. Such committed people were the waterworks employees who provided the drinking water for cities during a siege, or paramedics during the wars. Such committed people are ready to risk their own lives, and, if they are religious, to commit their spirit into God's hands. A prayer by Saint Ignatius, founder of the Jesuit order is a beautiful expression of this readiness. As he says in his *Take, Lord, and Receive*:

> *"Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me. To Thee, O Lord, I return it. All is Thine, dispose of it wholly according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is sufficient for me."*

EMOTIONAL TRANSPARENCY

A key element of a good romantic relationship is mutual emotional transparency. A possible interpretation of this concept is that we have no secrets, we communicate everything about ourselves. The opposite of this is a relationship burdened with secrets. As a student of social pedagogy put it in a seminar paper, "The problem with secrets is that they break the basic trust that is integral to a well-functioning relationship. Knowing that our partner is capable of hiding something from us without us realising it destroys the feeling that we can fully trust the other person. A possible reason for keeping secrets might be a lack of self-confidence, something many suffer from. They think that if they show their true selves, nobody will love them. What they fail to realise is that in such cases it is not 'them' who are being loved, but the mask covering their real personality that people adore. Nobody can hide the truth for long. Eventually, their true colours show causing great problems in the relationship."

An example of this is a married couple who had lived a very happy family life for a long time, raising their children. However, the wife had a secret. In the first year of their marriage, she had cheated on her husband, which she came to regret very much. At a very intimate moment, she decided to reveal this to her spouse. The result was an immediate break up, because she was unable to communicate the secret in a way to make her husband understand.

Married couples and even experts react very differently to this story. However, one thing is certain: in a good relationship individuals must strive for emotional transparency, that is, they must make efforts to communicate all relevant information clearly and honestly. Everyone is personally responsible for making sure that in a relationship their messages are understood exactly as intended. This means that we should refrain from communication if there is a risk that the partner may not understand the message. Although, it is paramount that emotional transparency be achieved, because this is a prerequisite for a lasting, good relationship. Both individuals in the relationship should feel free to ask, "What are you thinking about?", "How are you feeling?" This sort of emotional transparency releases creative energies, which strengthen the relationship.

GIVING UP ACCUSATIONS

A most common pitfall in a relationship is accusation and assigning blaming. It is possible to criticise and blame ourselves as well, regretting a past mistake or present, hard-to-shake shortcoming. What is even more dangerous is when we think that we must correct our partner in the same way. When the "blame game" begins, however, and a person is accused of something, they start defending themselves and looking for something to accuse their partner with. This is a time-consuming vicious circle that destroys the relationship. No one has ever improved as a result of blame. The reason for blaming others is found in

the person who does the blaming, not in the accused. When a person's creative energies are repressed (even if supposedly by the spouse), people blame their partners for blocking their development. If partners seek to establish a blame-free relationship, they must commit themselves to one another again. We are convinced that a good relationship emerges as crises are overcome. There are things which a partner may feel intolerable in the other's behaviour, and which, if left unspoken, lead to divorce. How is it possible to manage conflicts, but refrain from blaming the other? In a conflict, partners fully accept each other, and strive to change certain behaviours and give up bad habits for the sake of the good relationship. However, the conflict should never force one side to give up integral parts of their personality or to fully surrender to the other party's demands, for that leads to an unbalanced relationship, one partner dominating the other. Criticism must definitely be aimed at strengthening the other's self identity. It is true that this communication is very difficult and can only be achieved if the partners genuinely love each other.

Taking responsibility is of great importance to mature and competent persons. There are two possible interpretations of this: to take control of a situation or to keep oneself accountable for actions done or decisions made. For the reasons discussed above, keeping the other accountable will destroy the partnership, whereby assuming responsibility for our own action will considerably strengthen the bond. Let us start with an example. One partner in a married couple goes shopping, but does not buy something important, for instance, tea. Instead of

blaming the partner for not picking up that one item, the spouse points out that it was he or she who also forgot to buy tea when running the errands. In other words, a relationship is based on taking shared responsibility, never on levelling blame.

It is also a great burden on a relationship if you are constantly preoccupied with personal conflicts outside the relationship. Ruminating over grievances or dreaming of revenge take much time and energy that could be devoted to caring for your spouse. The only people who truly suffer in this case are the person tangled up in such affairs and the neglected spouse. To let go of such thoughts and fantasies, wilful commitment is needed. Obviously, this does not mean you should not deal with these issues, but they should be handled in such a way that your partner does not suffer neglect or hurt as a result.

RELEASING CREATIVE ENERGIES

In a good relationship not obligation, but creativity is key. Every day, we should devote some time to creative activity, doing things like writing poems or drawing, having a cup of tea or taking a hot bath. Releasing our creativity is a play, a joy felt because of spontaneous activities. Those do it best who learnt how to play during childhood.

Positive psychology differentiates three dimensions of happiness. The first is positive experience. Releasing creative energies brings about positive experiences; creativity entails positive experience. However, real

creativity is a state of inspiration, and the first level serves to help people achieve the second one.

In other words, the second level of happiness is inspired activity, where inspiration denotes a state of mind where we fully experience our role in the world. We call this inspired state "flow", a term coined by Mihály Csíkszentmihalyi world-famous psychologist living in the USA. In this flow state, the individual is completely absorbed in and fully identifies with his or her activity. Csíkszentmihályi relates that years after he started using the term, a Shanghai-based researcher showed that ancient Taoists sages used the same analogy, applying the term *yu*, which means "fly" or "flow". Csíkszentmihályi adds that *yu* was used to describe the state of consciousness of persons who live according to the Tao, that is, who chose the right way of being. As he highlights, the concept of the flow is not entirely new; most ancient texts, both oriental and occidental, make references to it as an optimal experience. In such a state, learning, intellectual work or even physical work (such as cleaning, washing up, mending a car) can become a joyful activity in which creative energies can flow freely. This is why some say it is worthwhile to release creative energies before tedious tasks, to ensure that those necessary or mandatory activities are performed in an inspired state.

The third and highest level of happiness is when human beings believe that their lives are meaningful. This, in turn, allows for creative energies to be channelled in a meaningful way. In a relationship, this third level appears when both individuals know who they are personally, and have found their place in society and in the world. This

self-identification comes as a culmination of commitment, emotional transparency, the release of creativity, and mutual recognition, about which we will briefly speak in the following paragraphs.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION

A community of life requires the continuous practice of verbal and non-verbal recognition. Allport claims that a developed personality does not narrow down but expands the partner's space or opportunities, and strengthens the other's self-identity. A possible way of doing this is to regularly and consistently acknowledge the partner's positive traits. This is not done in general terms but in everyday details. Praise becomes more valuable when about specific things, however small they may be. For example, one can praise their partner's appearance, and good ideas. This recognition and positive reinforcement goes beyond romantic relationships and into other areas of life like the workplace. When employees feel that their colleagues appreciate them, the atmosphere of the workplace greatly improves.

Showing positive emotions is of paramount importance not only in a marriage, but in any relationship. Psychologists say we should express positive emotions about three times as much as negative. Of course, we should not be afraid to show negative emotions. If we did so, we would be lying. In every interpersonal relationship, we should feel free to express whether we like something or not. We must, however, do so with love. Reproaching our partner for

something we dislike will only bring out his or her hostility – and this is where the vicious cycle of blame and hurt begins. Couples know very well each other's tender and weak spots, and with words often trigger them. The other person does the same, and the relationship is slowly but surely poisoned, and eventually destroyed. Family therapy teaches couples how to break this cycle and rebuild the relationship. The key step in the process is becoming aware of and stopping the self-destructive circles.

Still, it is to be noted, that a basic rule of behavioural science is to refrain from always praising our spouse or children when they do something well. Rather, we should praise them from time to time, as if randomly. More importantly, we should never criticise our partner in a hostile way and damage his or her self-esteem. Criticism poisons relationships. It is distressing to see that so many young people, even though they want to be happy and love each other, when they get married, fall into the same traps of blame and criticism over and over again. Tensions accumulate during the day, needing to released, and, since they cannot let their frustrations out at the workplace, they do so at home.

In his book *The Demons and Angels of Our Soul*, professor of theology Tamás Nyíri describes such a psychological phenomena as the individual being possessed by the devil. If we are constantly bemoaning about our boss' treatment of us, then it is as if we were possessed by a demon, we simply cannot get rid of these thoughts. The tragic thing is that incessant anger and hatred enslave us, and we become a prisoner to the very person we want to

get free from. In such cases, we must call on the "angels" of hope or joy to help, because they can cast out the demons from our soul. A good partner plays a very important role in this. If we find our partner obsessed with a situation, we must not snap at them; on the contrary, we must try and take them to another plane of existence. Rather say something to divert their attention, that he or she can be happy about.

COMMUNICATION IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Marriage crises often arise when couples have communication mishaps that they could easily avoid, by being aware of them and by managing them well. Why do we need such skills? In the olden days, people thrived without learning how to communicate. If a man wanted to escape from an environment where he did not fit in, he simply became a priest or a soldier. Women had fewer options than these, with the exception of becoming a nun – devoting themselves to a celibate life. The course of life was more predictable at that time, with arranged marriages and learning the family trade being the standard norms of the era. Nowadays, we encounter innumerable unexpected situations. We belong to thousands of communities, and are no longer bound by certain social standards or traditions. Thus, it is no wonder that we struggle with communication, cornering ourselves in situations we could avoid. In short, the increasing complexity of the

world has made it necessary for humanity to re-learn how to communicate.

Regarding the modern-day deficiency in communication know-how, young adults are prevalent in their lack of social skills. This mainly applies to those who grew up in single-parent families where they did not have the opportunity to learn how to communicate in a relationship. In order to combat such a deficiency, Dutch children are taught communication skills in kindergarten. This manifests itself in that every morning, students sit in a circle and are asked to talk about their positive and negative experiences they had with their peers. During the discussions, the teachers monitor the children so that conflicts do not turn hostile.

In the early 2000s, the Institute of Behavioural Sciences started to use the Williams Life Skills stress management method developed by researchers in the United States. We culturally adapted this method for Hungarian application, and developed the teenager version for 14–18-year olds. The programme consists of several steps: recognizing and being aware of thoughts and feelings, practising deflection skills, relaxation techniques, creative problem solving and assertion.

CHARACTER TRAITS REQUIRED FOR A COMMUNITY FOR LIFE

LAYING DOWN THE FOUNDATION OF HEALTHY PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

A community of life can emerge only between healthy, mature persons. Upon entering a relationship, young people behave much less mature than at a later stage in life. Yet the foundations of those healthy personality traits, which, in turn, are required for maturity, are laid down in early childhood. Austrian psychiatrist Alfred Adler says that an inferiority complex evolves in infancy or early childhood. Erikson claims that primal trust develops in the first year of life, which is the basis of all intimate relationships, while, he adds, the ability to establish intimate relationships develops in young adulthood (the sixth of the eight stages of psychosocial development). According to Allport, we gradually build up our sense of self, starting at infancy, and retain the same personality traits (in a less developed form) at the beginning of an intimate relationship.

Adler adds that humans are completely vulnerable in the first stage of their life: the extent of unquenchable desire for power which develops as a result of the inferiority complex depends on the behaviour of the environment. He maintains that, in fact, every child faces life with an inferiority complex. They would not even exist without cooperation and a meaningful sense of community among those near them. Taking into consideration how small and helpless children are for a long time and that this experience makes them feel that they are barely fit for life, we must assume that the beginning of psychological life is always marked with an inferiority complex of various degrees.

Children become especially prone to developing an inferiority complex when those important in their lives do not consider them important, what is more, think that they are insignificant or burdensome. Children with an inferiority complex focus their efforts on acquiring the superiority over their environment. As Adler puts it, the question of how to prevent the development of the thirst for power and superiority most efficiently (a most striking nuisance of human civilisation) is not easy to answer, because the point at which the desire for power emerges is also when adults and children struggle most to make themselves understood. He goes on to say that living with a child gives opportunity to shape each child's ability to cooperate and sense of community to an extent that will prevent the pursuit of power from taking over. In order for a child to correctly develop in this way, an undisturbed, trust-based relationship with the mother and later with the father is needed.

Adler opines that the inferiority complex is difficult to treat. Still, we must assume that in the course of personal development the sense of community and cooperation can become dominant. As Hungarian poet Sándor Weöres writes:

"I, too, have come to conquer the world,
yet myself I cannot defeat.

I can only with heavy stone besiege myself,
or fall prey to my own bewitch'ry or deceit.

I too wished to be a master once,
Oh, if only I a good servant could be.

But, alas, there's but one servant: God.
And groan under its masters' doth infinity."

FROM DAMAGED SELF-ESTEEM TO HUNGER FOR POWER

As was previously established, power-hungry persons are driven by a lack of self-worth (inferiority complex), regularly comparing themselves to others and wanting to be different or special. Therefore, they envy everyone whom they perceive to be superior to themselves. They hate the people they envy, and, try to defeat and destroy the objects of their envy. In many cases, they feel most powerful when they know that they can ruin others – which they do. As shown by Hungarostudy 2002, envy is a factor that increases mortality among middle-aged men. This means that envy is dangerous to both the power-monger and their environment alike.

People suffering from an inferiority complex do not consider themselves a part of a community, but rather feel separated. They find pleasure in what they can control; namely, themselves, that is, they are closed up within themselves. At the same time, they want to control everything else within their grasp: material assets, positions, others' bodies and souls, even ideas and absolute truth. While wanderers simply become part of nature, admiring it while walking through a sunlit meadow covered with

flowers, people obsessed with possession fence off that same meadow in order to prevent others from entering – keeping it all for themselves. They have a negative attitude, are ambitious to build boundaries they consider legitimate, consider themselves to be above the law, and are prone to violence and corruption. The power-obsessed carries on an incessant war against an alienated world. This is a state of self-enclosure, which is accompanied by painful inner emptiness. Pleasures are meant to fill this emptiness, but many of these pleasures are often self-destructive and can even ruin others as well.

When communication is used to seize power, it is based on deception. Those who seek power do not show their true colours, but project what decision-makers want to see. They make false statements to tie their rivals' hands, and distort the thinking of decision-makers with their deceptive tricks. When communicating, they neither care about reality nor are they aware of it; they are simply concentrating on what to say in order to achieve their objective. This is how they can keep others in ignorance, making them totally vulnerable.

An effective method to keep power is to provoke and then counterbalance conflicts. This is nothing new; since the Roman emperors, all dictatorships have implemented the strategy of "divide and rule". For persons obsessed with power, leadership equals to the art of provoking conflicts.

Traditionally, to have power means to control the way society functions whilst bearing the responsibility that goes along with that control. Power-hungry people

usually strive for societal control without shouldering the responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

Once those people have that power, they do everything they can to keep it - with the least investment of energy, of course. The easiest way to maintain this control is to oppress all grass-root movements. Those who seek to maximize their power do not strive for success (with power as a means) but rather having power in and of itself is the end. For the sake of gaining such power, in many cases, they debase people and deprive them of control over their lives. Those who are active are immobilised, and those who are (considered) inactive (or are not productive enough) are driven to the brink of burnout. Anxiety is provoked, as there are always some who are punished or laid off. Masses of vulnerable, depressed, narrow-minded people who lack values and control are the easiest to control. This happens when power is exercised through restricting colleagues and staff. In a marriage, the methods and practice of seizing power is similar those used in other communities.

When such methods are applied, it is impossible to establish a consensus of values, a huge amount of creative energy is wasted, and the stress level (either in work or in marriage) is very high. In a relationship, desire for power and possession excludes the possibility of the evolution of a community of life, as those who are obsessed with power use the manipulative techniques discussed above to seize and keep power.

Interestingly, the majority of people make attempts to reconcile their desire for power to their environment. They understand that, in the system of time and space where we

live, every act of free will brings about an infinite series of consequences which can be traced back to the actor or the person who made the decision. Our body is mortal, but the impacts we make in the ever-developing system of time and space are permanent; therefore, it seems to be in our basic interest to make lasting impacts. Many understand that human beings are interested in their own social impacts, in building the world. They engage enthusiastically in public matters, eager to serve others. This state, however, can be a subtle form of the desire to possess. Paul refers to this when he says in hist first letter to the Corinthians: "If I give all I possess to the poor (...) but do not have love, I gain nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:3)

This passion for control is so dreadful that many feel that they must do everything possible, even going so far as to live monastical or hermit-style lives, to break free of even the attitude of power-mongering. Saint Francis of Assisi died lying naked on the bare floor to let fellow friars know that he possessed nothing of this world. Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta declared herself to be merely an instrument in God's hands, acting only upon his initiation.

The question is whether the passion for power and possession is to be regarded as a mental illness (as Adler says) or as a moral issue carrying personal responsibility. We do not need to take sides on this issue. Rather, it is more important to know that one can escape this thirst for power and control through the covenant drawn up between God and man in which we become part of God's community.

A HEALTHY PERSONALITY

Allport calls this act of breaking free from the closed world of lonely self "the extension of the sense of self". It is up to us whether we see the world as hostile and a "hell" to be escaped or whether we view it as the very "heaven" we want to be part of. According to Adler, this is based on the fact that cooperation and the sense of community become fundamental from an early age and remain with the individuals all their lives. These elements exist in various forms and within various limitations, and, ideally, extend not only to family, but to tribe, nation, and to all mankind. What is more, Adler argues, it can transcend even these boundaries, and extend to animals, plants, inanimate objects, and, eventually, to the whole universe.

Allport gives a list of six ideal characteristics of a mature personality:

1. Extension of the sense of self
2. Warmth and empathy toward self and others
3. Accepting oneself and being emotionally stable
4. Having realistic perceptions of self and the world, possessing realistic skills, and setting realistic goals
5. Having an objective view of self and possessing a sense of humour
6. Unifying philosophy of life.

The section below discusses the implications of the presence or absence of the above factors for an individual (in a relationship), the relationship and the social environment where the couple lives and works.

1. The extended sense of self means that the individuals refrain from controlling or possessing anyone, seek to partake in the relationship, the community and the world equally. They are interested in things outside themselves and engage in the events around them. Participation is not only an activity, but identification with the object of action. For personal relationships, says Allport, this means that the happiness of the other is just as important as our own. He adds that we become less and less self-centred as time goes on. We cannot control the community of life we share with our spouses, nor the community we share with mankind or with the universe – we can only become part of it. This is based on love, which, in turn, is the will to be as Jesuit father Jenő Vácz said, "it is good that you exist and I want you to exist even more". Based on this definition of love, we can break free from our lonely self if we identify our will with the creative and constructive forces of the universe, because the Creator's love also says: "it is good that you exist and I want you to exist even more". This is how we commit to becoming an integral part of a relationship, of a human community, of the world, while accepting help from the environment which sustains us. This is how we find our place in the world.

2. Being intimate with others means being accepting in both close and distant relationships. Allport claims that as a result of the extension of self, mature persons are able to love intimately, that is, they want the other to

be and to become more and more complete over time. He adds that a precondition of intimacy is to avoid being burdensome to others, hindering others, or restricting others while searching for our own identity. Quite the contrary, intimacy is the recognition and expansion of the spouse's positive traits. Evidently, it is impossible to establish a real community of life without intimacy.

3. Accepting oneself and being emotionally stable. Love shown towards ourselves is the same as self-acceptance. Self-acceptance is based on the uninterruptible sense of security in life, which, in turn, is built on a child's basic trust in his or her parents, and an undisturbed relationship with the mother. If we accept ourselves, says Allport, we are also willing to accept the fear of imminent danger, common to all, as well as the ultimate threat of death. He also highlights that an egotistical person, because he is still immature, is held captive by these things. Also essential to self-acceptance is the ability to tolerate frustrating people, occurrences, or situations. As Allport highlights, mature persons can successfully cope with frustration and are able to admit guilt when needed. Such persons are able to wait for the right moment and make plans of how to overcome an obstacle, because they have learnt to refrain from acting impulsively or doing things that would harm others. We can judge ourselves according to our abilities, always comparing our present self to the previous one. This acceptance, however, is not

necessary. This is the very point of the inferiority complex as described by Adler. We cannot accept ourselves as we are, because we want to be someone else. Therefore, we compare ourselves to others and struggle to accept when others have success and we do not. Basic self-acceptance is one of the principles of American psychologist Carl Rogers. According to him, only persons who accept themselves are capable of helping others. This sense of security and self-acceptance are indispensable for a relationship, as it is the basis for mutual recognition.

4. Healthy individuals have a realistic view of the world, are open-minded and act in response to the real world. These ideals are key to an employee's success. As Allport highlights, healthy persons who lack the ins and outs of their profession will not be able to create the security or the tools needed for the expansion of their self. A full life must include a task or a vocation to which we can commit ourselves. In most cases, a person aims at a goal that is non-existent, and seeks to make it a reality. If we have a realistic perception of that goal and the skills to match, we can see not only our goal, but also the path leading to it. Commitment to completing our "mission" results in achieving the goal. The three stages which are equally needed for repairing a roof, creating a work of art or caring for a baby. In today's Hungary, relationships are characterised by a natural division of work. An example of this might be the empathetic mother who is more of an expert on

children's problems and the task-oriented father who is more of an expert on financial matters. Very often, it is the mother who hears the child moaning, while the father will be the first to notice an unusual noise in the car engine. Because the differences existent, both need to trust one another to make the relationship work - this is a precondition for a community of life. The way an individual can become a member of a relationship, of a human community, or the "community of saints" is described with the same three stages. The first is the vision, the conviction that it is possible. The second stage is hope, which makes the individual see the path leading to that community. The third and last phase is commitment and love, which is the effective action itself, i.e. the achievement of the goal.

5. Having an objective view of self and possessing a sense of humour. To intuit the relationships within a society or the cosmos, individuals need three complementary and largely overlapping abilities: self-identity, self-acceptance and self-awareness. "Nothing requires more rare intellectual heroism than willingness to see one's equation written out", Allport says, quoting the Spanish philosopher George Santayana. Self-knowledge aligns cosmic dimensions with human limitations. Perhaps this is why self-awareness is closely related to a sense of humour. Comic spirit is "being able to detect the ridicule of them; you love, without loving them less: and more by being able to see yourself somewhat ridiculous in dear eyes", Allport quoting

the English novelist George Meredith. In every relationship, especially in romantic relationships, playfulness and humour are key for the partners to see each other as lovable, with all their faults. A sense of humour is the basis for forgiveness.

6. Such persons live in harmony with the unifying philosophy of life, which means that they can see life's events and the knowledge available to them in a unified system, and they can correctly interpret their own life within this system. This entails coherence with the environment, allowing us to understand the meaning of our life, find explanations for life's essential questions, be guided by our values and beliefs, thus giving our actions purpose and significance. According to Allport, the unifying philosophy of life has many varieties depending on culture and personality: theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political or religious. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle calls the meaning of life eudaimonia, which means identification with the tutelary deity. These categories are used in the analysis below.

The Hungarostudy 2002 survey used the survey of U.S. psychiatrist Richard Rahe's *Brief Stress and Coping Inventory*. The questions related to life meaning are as follows:

– I feel my life is part of a larger plan.
– Many things in life give me great joy.
– I am able to forgive myself and others.

– I doubt that my life makes a difference.
– My values and beliefs guide me daily.
– I feel in tune with people around me.
– I am at peace with my place in life.

The items on the meaning of life in the questionnaire allow for many interpretations of "life meaning". A high score correlates with religiosity; but not all religious people see the meaning of life, while many non-religious people do. (These results fall in line with Allport's view on the meaning of life.)

In a community of life, both individuals try to reconcile their philosophy of life to each other, a move that might enrich them both. Even if they basically perceive and say the same things, they still use unique modes of expression. They think together about life's meaning and the key issues of life, which may give rise to the excellent experience of insight and may greatly strengthen the relationship.

However, trust and the acceptance of the partner will not suffice; those only provide a starting point. A relationship that fails to develop is bound to move backward. Taming our partner, exploring how he or she is different from us is at least as important as expanding our professional knowledge. One cannot be a good professional if they do not read about or do not know the new methods and procedures of their profession. Similarly, we must always, as much as possible, listen and respond to the development, change and desires of our spouse and children.

RETUNING OUR STATE OF MIND

In every moment of our conscious life, we must decide, based on our past experience, whether or not we have the skills to solve a given situation. The problem starts when we do not know how or what is needed to overcome a situation which we find impossible or dangerous to us. But let us think about the different ways we render a situation unsolvable. Some find it impossible to enter a crowded shop, others are inexplicably afraid of any form of speaking in public. At the other extreme, people seek danger for the thrill, and feel they are capable of solving the most daring task.

For animals, the most important thing is to maintain physical balance and remain in prime condition. By contrast, we human beings – while considering physical balance to be an important goal – may attribute more significance to the values, life objectives and attitudes we identify with. Our ideal self and our system of norms are shaped by our family, education and then self-education.

If recognition and praise are the most important things in life to you, then you will feel let down and neglected when your expectations are left unmet. Similarly, expecting too much of yourself will leave you ruminating about mistakes you have made and shortcomings you have, preventing you from being all that you could be. Comparing yourself and your environment to an ideal, you will be disappointed, because reality does not correspond to that image.

These goals, attitudes, norms and ways of thinking development the human mind from a very early age, mainly through the influence of our parents and others in the immediate environment; this is, of course, if we are able to identify with the patterns they provide. Therefore it is

highly important for children to develop their own ideals and goals in harmony with their abilities and potential. It is more likely that in an accepting and loving environment we will see an initially hopeless situation as solvable and view ourselves in a positive light, than in a hostile one.

A key feature of a sound personality is that we are able to fine tune our central nervous system according to the situation. We can become extroverted when, for instance, we are hiking and know that we should not take note of every small injury or, in a company, when we ought to listen to everyone.

Therefore, a key objective of education would be to teach children to refocus their minds. Since time immemorial, mankind has always applied such methods. Physical exercise, for example, also resets the nervous system into an extrovert mode. By contrast, when we need to concentrate on studying for an exam, an introverted state of mind is preferred.

These widely-used terms were introduced by Jung, who described personality types in terms of extraversion (outward turning) and introversion (inward turning), emotional and rational, and empirical and intuitive. Extroverts are characterised by integrating well into communities, are generally liked by others and can achieve much. Introverts are capable of high intellectual performance, but find it difficult to assert themselves and, therefore they often want to control their environment.

Rational thinkers examine whether a statement is true or false, while emotional thinkers take into account the moral attitudes of other people. Empirical are more likely

to perceive quantities, while intuitives notice possibilities. In terms of examples of these kind of people, individuals with technical qualifications are generally empirical-and rational, while inventors are intuitive-and rational. Artists are emotional-and intuitive. The behaviour attributed to these types, the disadvantages of their way of thinking, and their weak points are easy to imagine.

LEARNED OPTIMISM

U.S. psychologist Martin Seligman, who described the theory of learned helplessness, has been long engaged in happiness research, that is, in understanding how people can become happy through learned optimism. Happiness is not a mood; meaning we can still feel negative emotions. Besides, any person who is in a euphoric mood for an extended period of time may suffer from either some level of mania or hypomania. Scientific experiments indicate that in a healthy person's life, the ratio of positive and negative feelings and thoughts is approximately two to one. As an example, let us observe ourselves and others when thinking or speaking. We will notice that some people never cease to send negative messages. This reflects a very negative state of mind and they most probably suffer a lot. When observing ourselves, if we realise that negative expressions or thoughts start to dominate our communication, then we have a problem. In response, we should attempt to express positivity, because this may improve our state of mind.

Sooner or later, psychological problems such as anxiety and depression will turn into physical symptoms which will provoke serious changes in the hormonal system and the immune system. The best animal model of depression is learned helplessness. When an animal is put into a box where it receives electric shocks, instinctively, it will try to escape. If it cannot escape, after a while it will learn that attempts to escape are futile, and stop trying. From that point on, it will simply accept this fate, thereby entering a state of learned helplessness.

Human beings can get into such a state as well. This often occurs in a social or educational environment where they realise that whatever they do, they will not succeed: the teacher will not praise them, they will always be bad students, their boss will always rebuke them or their spouse will always humiliate them. Seligman described the opposite concept, that is, of learned resourcefulness, learned optimism. The idea is that people can learn that, whatever the action taken be, they will generally succeed, and thus they can come to regard that streak of success as natural.

A great merit of the education system in the United States is that it makes attempts to strengthen and reinforce each and every student in what they are good at. In Israel, every student (previously only boys) is regarded as a potential Messiah, or, as we would put it, the miracle child of the divine mother. Children who grow up in such an environment, will be much more resilient and productive. Surely, a lot of talented children are born, but education plays a crucial role in enabling them to capitalise on their talent and achieve their full potential.

THE ROLE OF GENDER IN RELATIONSHIPS

There is a Hungarian saying to describe a confused state of mind: "I don't even know if I am a man or a woman."

Nowadays, there are heated debates on gender research, albeit many do not understand the exact nature of this broad field. It is therefore worth discussing why the topic is important and why it should be approached from a religious perspective (rather than rejected), and why the directions of this research should be influenced, if possible.

What is gender? Since unfortunately there are no specific words in the Hungarian language for the two definitions of gender in gender research, the translation "social gender" is used to try to express what the term means. The English word "sex" refers to biological sex which is relatively easy to define and is quite similar in humans and animals.

In contrast, gender is an exclusively human phenomenon. The term "gender" covers characteristics of human behaviour that are attributable to the changes in social and cultural traditions and roles. These traditions and roles are instilled in us from birth by our environment. These characteristics determine our behaviour to a large degree. Therefore, gender is the situation in which we find ourselves within modern society, due to the instinctive, ethological inheritance of our sex characteristics.

Obviously, some behaviours and characteristics stem from our genetic makeup, our sex, but others are continuously evolving as society is changing. This is especially true of the last century, when the world and the environment have changed significantly, and, consequently, the gender roles, though seemingly permanent, have undergone drastic changes.

The starting points of gender research are those phenomena which are determining factors of biological and psychological sexual development and are independent of culture or society. Bearing children and breastfeeding, and establishing a secure mother-child relationship are tasks specifically for women. These days, it is even more important to help young women understand that these are quintessential to their roles as women and mothers; something that in previous centuries, was modelled naturally by the mothers of the past. By the same token, men's inalienable "vocation" is to procreate. It is not true that men do not have an instinctive desire to live on in their children. It is only modern society that reduces this desire to sexuality for its own sake. Thus, the starting point of gender research is that despite (or as a result of) social changes, it is of special importance to raise awareness of and create the conditions for parenthood as a vocation, a mission.

THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY MODEL AND FEMINISM

Many would gladly idealise former family models, but we must acknowledge that until the first half of the 20th century, women faced very serious discrimination. For example, they were hardly allowed to obtain higher education. Moreover, greater physical strength, a biological characteristic typical to men that helped in hunting and warfare, has played an important role in the development of male privilege. In today's division of labour, knowledge

and skills acquired through learning and education take priority over physical strength. Interestingly, nowadays, young girls are studying in as great a number or greater than that of young men. It is evident to both society and individuals that women intend neither to waste the energy invested in their studies, nor to neglect their desires to have many children. This calls for a completely new division of roles between women and men. Formerly, with the exception of queens, women had no chance to make a significant social impact. Even in the early 20th century, it was impossible for women to study at medical universities. By contrast, today's women have access to many career paths that formerly were closed to them.

Gender research, among other things, seeks to identify the current status of gender equality and whether men and women actually enjoy equal opportunities. The basic objective is to avoid opposing women's interests with men's interests. Feminist movements have achieved a great deal in the area of gender equality. It must be noted that at the beginning of the 19th century, it took decades for the first Hungarian female physician to obtain a license to practise, and a very strict *numerus clausus* applied to female students at most universities. Remarkably, it was not until 1971 that women in Switzerland were granted the right to vote. Therefore, it is understandable that civil rights activists fighting for women's rights wanted to eliminate such serious infringements.

Yet some feminist movements do not seek to cooperate, but rather to reinforce opposition. This approach, as in all fields, leads to a dead end in gender research. Thus, a

new method of cooperation is needed. A good example of a new form of cooperation between men and women is showcased by Finland. In the 1960s, the premature mortality rate of men in Finland, due to various causes, was similar to today's figures in Hungary. To change this, women in North Karelia marched to the Ministry of Health with the slogan "We do not want to become widows" – a cry to help save their husbands from premature demise. This sparked health reform throughout the country that to date is one of the most effective health programmes. This information is invaluable since Hungary has wound up in a similar situation – with the premature death of men, due to various reasons, being quite high. Our studies have clearly shown that rivalry, competition, and the fear of lagging behind are important predictors of premature death in men. Should they fall behind in this incessant race to dominate, they experience severe stress. This raises a pertinent question: Is it necessary that this drive to fight to be the "alpha", a characteristic found in all men, continue to dominate the masculine behaviour?

CHANGE DIAPERS AND LIVE LONGER

Our research data show that men who have a good relationship with their children are four times more likely to reach the age of 69, even if the data were checked for known risk factors (for example smoking, alcohol abuse, obesity, level of education, age). Moreover, men who have a good relationship with their wives are five times more likely to live longer. In Nordic countries, it was found

that life expectancy further improved for men and women alike, one of the reasons being that fathers take paternity leave to care for their young children (time not taken by the father as paternity leave is forfeited by law).

But why is it that caring and taking full responsibility for a child protects men's health? We surmise the following: nowadays, Hungarian men tend to overexert themselves, feeling that their one and only task is to spend more and more time at their workplace. A woman, however, no matter how hard she works, attaches just as much importance to what is going on with their children, what to cook on Sunday or whom to invite for dinner. In the value system of women, there are many other important factors, which protect them from severe chronic stress in life. If men learn this, these could become strong protective factors for them as well.

If family and caring for children become important elements in men's value systems, then they might stop worrying only about their work and social status. It is in this context that men should take to heart the recommendation "Change diapers, and live longer". In contemporary context, it is very useful for little boys to play with kitchen play sets or with dolls and for little girls to play with toy tools. It will not damage their gender identity; they will be simply better prepared to perform successfully the tasks of today's gender roles.

Nowadays, the dual-earner family model is quite common, and in many cases women earn more than their partners do. Since the ethological gender model continues to exist, the general concept is that maintaining the family

and providing for living conditions is, in essence, the man's job. Among the European countries involved in the study, this attitude is most characteristic of Hungary. This expectation can become a source of severe chronic stress for men, and contributes greatly to their premature health deterioration and mortality, and, moreover, discourages many men from starting a family. Consequently, the fundamental task of gender research is the proper coordination of the new forms of cooperation between men and women. Many problems must be addressed in this area, such as reconciling family life and work, sharing child-rearing responsibilities and household chores, supporting each other in career development, and so on.

Strengthening the role of men in the family is all the more important because nowadays, given the high number of divorces and the feminisation of society, fathers have practically disappeared, and boys have little opportunity to see a role model. This is a tragedy, because it triggers a vicious circle: when those boys grow up, they will not be able to commit fully to a lifelong relationship.

In addition, mothers today may also find it difficult to commit fully. Formerly, young mothers returned to their community after giving birth. They were not left alone with their newborns, and received all the information from already experienced mothers they needed about caring for a baby. Today's mothers can sometimes face months or even years of isolation, in estates or downtown apartments with no access to a garden. Unprepared young people may find the everyday reality of married and family life quite disappointing. They might start out with enthusiasm,

expecting their baby with great joy, only to have reality come out much different than they had planned. Very suddenly, the successful, highly qualified young woman might then find herself alone and unprepared to care for her small crying baby. She most certainly cannot get a good night's sleep (without help), and for a time cannot even leave the house. It is here, she feels totally confined. In most cases, the husband is unwilling to be fully involved in raising the child, as he does not think it is a shared responsibility. The wife finds this difficult to accept; making it no wonder that postpartum depression is now a "pandemic" that affects 20% of young women. Effective preventive programmes have been developed worldwide to prevent postpartum depression. For example, a few minutes a day on the phone with an experienced helper has been shown to significantly reduce the likelihood of developing depression (which would have serious negative consequences for the child as well).

This is why it is the task of the mother to establish a personal relationship between the newborn baby and the father, that is, to involve her husband or partner in the care of the baby. It may happen that the father, albeit he wanted to have a child too, did not think that he would have to put up with a crying baby at night and his formerly outgoing partner who used to have a career of her own would turn into a breastfeeding mother. This irresponsible behaviour of the father and his eventual infidelity is a serious ordeal for the mother. This also heavily weighs upon the babies, as they are sensitive to all of their mother's nervousness or

tension, and, they may grow up to be persons suffering from anxiety themselves.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHANGES IN GENDER ROLES

Up until the second half of the 20th century, the vast majority of young people were married – the most profound change can be shown in this respect. While in Christian circles in particular we tend to idealise marriages of past centuries, some reservations about earlier relationships seem justified. Even a hundred years ago, it was (and in some cultures still is) completely normal for parents to decide who their children would marry and, whether they like it or not, with whome they would spend their whole life. Daughter of well-to-do owner of large estates would marry sons of other large estate owners. From the 1950s onwards, when such landowners lost their lands due to collectivisation in Hungary, parents still continued to decide that after finishing primary school their doughter had to marry the son of the richest land owner.

This legal relationship based on privity within the family offered relative security for women, but was far from being consistently ideal. Literary works from the late 19th century and later, such as Ibsen's *Nora* or Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* depicted situations in which women tried to escape from such alliances of interest in which they felt subordinate and under guardianship. Historically, the institution of brothels accompanied that of marriage; women had to put up with that, too. (Obviously, some

marriages transformed into real communities of life, but such transformations were probably rare.)

Nowadays, in many places, young people can choose their partner voluntarily, meaning that they have an opportunity to establish alliances based on love, not on business and that will have the chance to stand the test of time. In an ever-changing, unpredictable society, such a true alliance, based on mutual trust, is the key factor in protecting physical and mental health, while it is clear that conflict-ridden, hostile relationships involve serious health risks. The *International Journal of Epidemiology*, a prestigious public health journal published the results of a study of the entire Finnish population conducted between 1996 and 2000. The outcomes indicate that among men aged 30–64 cohabiting men were 49% more likely and single men were 167% more likely to die than married men. Among women in this age group, the cohabiting women were 53% more likely to die than married women, and 75% more likely to die if they were single.

The study also found that having no children is also a major health risk factor: compared to those without children, men with two or more children were 30% and women with two or more children were 50% less likely to die between the age of 30 and 64. Mortality rate among single parents is between that of childless people and those with two or more children. Although the article suggests that selection factors play a role in who is married and who is childless, the correlations are still shocking. The results show that being childless or living alone is a more

important health risk factor than all known behavioural risk factors combined.

Also, a research team in San Diego compared women who had healthy children with women of the same age and same social status who had disabled or chronically ill children. Mothers in the latter group were biologically 7 to 24 years "older" than their counterparts. The less aged ones were those, who were able to accept their situation or receive help from their partners. For those who did not, the chronic stress considerably accelerated the process of biological and psychological aging. This example also shows that prolonged stress does have an impact on the overall condition of the body.

FAMILISM INSTEAD OF FEMINISM

The inevitable question arises: how does one harmoniously reconcile family life, child-bearing and child-rearing, and women's role in society at large? This is all the more important because, as many studies have shown, Hungarian society is still very much family- and child-centred. This means that while the number of adults who do not want to have children at all is very low, there is a significant gap between the number of the children people want and the number of children they actually have. This difference is even more pronounced among women with a higher level of education. (As shown by our surveys, 79% of the Hungarian population believes that people cannot be truly happy if they do not have children; 83.5% of fathers

and 89.2% of mothers think that "those who have children have a better life".)

Of course, nobody should be persuaded to have children against their will. However, for those who want children, adequate conditions should be provided to ensure equal opportunities, so that they will not be seriously disadvantaged compared to men of similar ability or women who do not have children. The fact that women who decide to have children are at a disadvantage is a form of serious discrimination, because many people see parenthood as a kind a hobby (a hobby that is not necessarily excusable).

For parents with small children, the best way to reconcile family life and work would be part-time work (or other forms of atypical work). Many studies show that a considerable proportion of women think that only part-time work is an acceptable option at certain stages of life. Of all other European Union member states, the prevalence of part-time work is the lowest in Hungary. The rate of such employment is about 9% for women and around 3% for men, while the EU average is approximately 40% for women and 10% for men. In the Netherlands, 70% of women work part-time.

Yet another important aspect is the flexibility of working hours. In the EU, along with the lowest rate of teleworking, Hungary has the lowest rate of employees with flexible working hours (12%), compared to 58% in Sweden. Flexible working time policy is designed to allow workers to decide when to start and finish work, and thus, be able to take their children to and from school or kindergarten. Yet

experience shows that part-time employment and flexible working hours are important tools for families with young children to reconcile work and family life. Moreover, it is proven that when employers take into consideration their employees' family responsibilities, then the employees' loyalty and their performance improve.

Flexible forms of home childcare, such as family kindergartens or family day-care centres must be supported. Many women provide home care while inactive on the labour market. Those not yet doing so should be encouraged to get involved in providing home care, through non-profit organisations, either as volunteers or employees.

This could be a way to organise local employment, especially in small municipalities, and to offer affordable assistance to those in need and an income from a meaningful activity for home helpers. Apart from an intensive first few months, babies who develop healthily do not need the mother's 24-hour presence, which means that women who wish to return to the world of work can do so gradually. At the same time, we must put an end to the unfavourable situation which entangles those women who choose to raise children (at least for a certain period of time). Not only do they face a challenging situation, but some people even consider them "free-riders", though taking responsibility for children's upbringing is the most important and responsible investment in the future.

From pre-school on, children should be offered subjects and programmes that prepare them for responsible and committed peer relationships, communication and

conflict management. To this end, teacher trainings should also integrate the acquisition of such skills. Universities and colleges should create a family-friendly environment to enable young university students to have children at a biologically and psychologically ideal age, and to prepare their future careers more adequately. Further enabling tools might include rented apartments for young people, housing support for couples, family-friendly exam schedules, the organisation of high-quality childcare services, and so on and so forth.

As clearly evidenced by surveys, the study of changes in gender roles is essential for both public health and population. Disruptions of cooperation between men and women have become an important risk factor that equals that of the self-destructive behaviours which we discussed above. Moreover, such disruptions are closely associated with gender role dysfunction. The aim of epidemiological subfield of gender studies is to analyse, with objective analytical methods, the ways of ensuring the best quality of life and the healthiest, most meaningful life for both men and women while facing the new challenges of the 21st century.

Accordingly, today there is a need for familism rather than feminism. Representatives of the familis worldview focuses on the unity and harmony of the family – man, woman and children –, in order to find a solution for the difficulties that stem from changes in gender roles. This new approach also protects fathers involved in childcare from the impacts of deeply ingrained male roles. In addition, it offers a partial solution to the problem of unemployment,

since an unemployed father who gladly devotes the thus increased free time to his family will endure more easily the eventually humiliating situation.

These days, this is the single most important issue. It is at least as important as the social issue at the end of the 19th century, which Christianity unfortunately yielded to Marxism. It was an incredible loss, since social thought has always been intrinsic to Christianity. Today, the gender issue is that the same. If we relinquish it for exclusive use by representatives of other approaches, then we may have to suffer similar consequences.

DETERMINING FACTORS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

MOTIVATIONS, NEEDS, DEMANDS

Motivations, needs and demands play a critical role in the regulation of human behaviour. There are different levels of motivation and needs, from basic instinctive drives to highest human needs. Unmet needs are a key driving force; they increase the motivation and the urge to change a given situation in order to satisfy that need. There is a close link between motivation and emotion as well: we feel joy when what we want to happen actually occurs, and when it does not, we experience grief and anger, or, when an unpleasant event occurs, we feel anxiety and fear, and when it does not happen, we feel relieved.

Emotions play a fundamental evolutionary role and are essential for survival. In general, they act as mediators between an ever-changing environment and the individual's behaviour, fulfilling a motivational and communicative function, as which they are highly important in our rapidly changing world. Assessing a particular situation has a significant impact on emotional states, which, in turn, affects other psychological functions. Among emotions, anxiety is of special importance. In essence, it is the experience of losing control in an emotionally negative situation. In certain situations, it is very natural to respond with anxiety. In others, it becomes pathological and unhealthy, particularly when we perceive perfectly surmountable situations as impossible. If it persists and begins to interfere with everyday life, it can be completely paralyzing.

In the course of human history, the manner in which humans lived varied and changed greatly, with the modern age making up a mere negligible fraction. In the days of old, the fishing-hunting and then the farming ways of life were common, and accordingly we adapted to the needs, threats, and challenges. Therefore, when analysing the role of emotions and motivation we have to talk not only about their functions but also about how the living conditions of humans have changed over time and why adaptation is more difficult now than it used to be, even 200 years ago. In the modern world the main threats to human life are chronic cardiovascular diseases, cancers and chronic pain syndromes, often collectively called civilisation diseases or adaptative diseases.

THE HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

The term "motivation" denotes the urge to satisfy needs (of which are different levels) and to regulate purposeful behaviour. "Drives" stem from physiological deficiencies such as hunger or thirst. Instinctive urges include self-preservation, hunger, thirst, sexual urges, reproduction, the need for safety and the need to explore. Many of these different urges can also be found in animals. The decisive criterion distinguishing human beings from animals is that humans are capable of subordinating their instinctive urges to higher moral needs and life goals, although the balance between the two is the basis of both mental and physical health.

Instinctive urges are innate, and determine animal behaviour. Hunger and thirst are related to self-preservation. Biologically determined social needs serve the purpose of reproduction; they including sexual and parental behaviour, which is partly determined by instinctive urges, but human behaviour transcends this level in a substantial and fundamental way.

The innate, instinctive pattern of parental behaviour significantly helps young people in having children to know instinctively what their children need even without having had any experience. Naturally, child rearing and the parent-child relationship presupposes the highest level of psychological skills and motivation. When it comes to mating and procreation, in the animal kingdom, it is almost entirely determined by instincts. For example, the female three-spined stickleback is willing to engage in mating, only if she senses the red colouration on the male's abdomen. If the red spot is covered, then the female will not move, even if the male seems otherwise desirable to her. Austrian ethologist Konrad Lorenz discusses many examples of such instinctive mating and parental behaviour.

Instinctive urges and needs play a critical role in humans as well. For example, the impact of women's fashion and fancy dresses is similar, in many respects, to that of colourful mating signs in the animal kingdom. Instinctive drives are also basic resources the main role of which is to act like the sails of a ship, catching the wind and driving the vessel toward its destination.

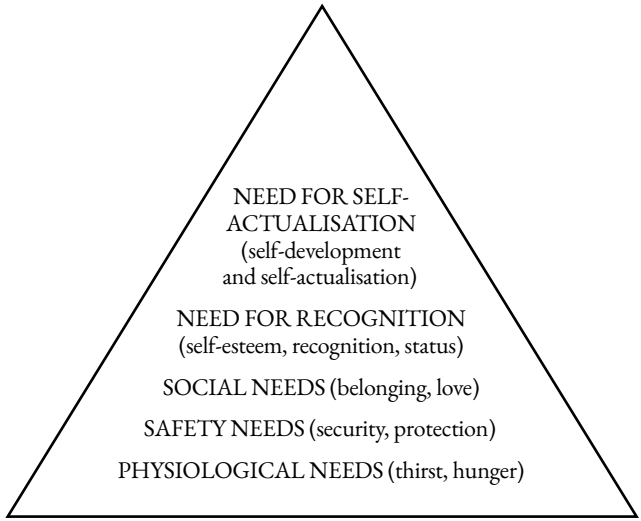
This is why French philosopher Montesquieu rightly said that if one does not know to which port one is sailing,

no wind is favorable. Plainly, humans, without goals, may easily fall prey to instincts. Another important need/characteristic of ours (and of animals as well) is curiosity, the need to experiment, discover, a trait which is best expressed in children's play yet that also manifests itself in joyful work, research, arts and crafts later in life.

Neurophysiologist Endre Grastyán wrote his academic thesis on the importance of play. He opined that the most serious shortcomings of modern parenting is that it does not allow children to develop the ability to play independently and thus deprives children of one of the most important sources of pleasure in later behavioural regulation. If the need for independent exploration and play does not develop, boredom and emptiness will take its place. This is the main cause of seeking excitement for the sake of it, as the maintenance of inner balance will require external stimulation such as drugs or loud music, instead of internal affirmation.

It was U.S. psychologist Abraham Maslow who described the hierarchy of human needs and formulated additional levels of those needs. In his mind, basic physiological needs are followed by:
– safety needs
– belonging and social needs
– esteem needs
– and self-actualisation needs.
Depending on the individual's values, the need for self-actualisation can both mean the desire for self-fulfilment at all costs, and also voluntary sacrifice for others. An example of the latter is German physician Albert Schweitzer, who

established a hospital for natives in Lambaréné, Africa at his own expense, while also becoming world-famous as a musicologist and organist.



FROM THE GRATIFICATION OF INSTINCTS TO SAINTHOOD

Another pertinent example is that of Adler, a most influential Austrian psychiatrist of the 20th century and a student of Sigmund Freud. This man expanded the theory of human motivation, shifting it towards social psychology. He theorized, *the personality cannot be examined outside its environment. A mature personality strives for a balance between itself and the external world. Human beings seek*

the actualisation of shared values and, therefore, human behaviour cannot be understood only from the perspective of instinctual drives and their repression. Persons who are unable to establish a balance with their environment seek to gain power at all costs and to subjugate those around them. This stems from their sense of inferiority. Adler further says that these unbalanced, power-seeking individuals often suffer from an inferiority complex. Conversely, compensating for the sense of inferiority may lead people to exceptional performance, to overcome themselves. The most beautiful example of which, is that of the performance of Paralympians who, despite their physical disability (or in order to compensate for it) are capable of extraordinary sports achievements.

When talking about regulation of human behaviour, Adler introduced "competence" as the most general concept, stating that humans, when making decisions, strive to optimise their own competence. Obviously, individual aspects of competence differ. For an Indian fakir, competence may mean the highest level of contemplation, and for an American businessman, business success. Or, for a person who grew up watching videos, lacking real personal relationships, it is the optimisation of consumption. This means that some people may seek to avoid a situation, while others set the same situation as a goal. Thus, for example, persons devoted to consumer society want to avoid suffering at all costs, while humanistic culture regards voluntary sacrifice for others as a fundamental value.

According to Maslow, the highest level components of the need for self-actualisation are the search for the

meaning of life, realising personal potential by setting and achieving long-term goals, and the realisation of the common goals of mankind. However, he assumes that humans satisfy their most basic (deficiency) needs first, and only then do they seek to meet higher level (growth) needs. For example, hungry people may not be interested at all in recognition or social status. This system is logical, but by no means universal. Similarly, in his thought experiment, Freud assumed that if various people were exposed to the same degree of starvation, then, as the need for food intensifies, their individual differences will fade away and will gradually be replaced by the uniform manifestations of the unmet instinctual need.

In contrast, Viktor Frankl, who was head of the Vienna Clinic of Neuropsychiatry for decades in the second half of the 20th century, further developed the results of the Viennese schools of Freudian psychoanalysis and Adlerian 'individual psychology'. He laid down the foundations of existential analysis and the logotherapy method called the Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy. During World War II, Frankl was held captive in concentration camps for three years. His theory and his image of the human being are substantiated by his experience there. Contrary to the conclusions of Freud's thought experiment, he experienced the very opposite: "There, the 'individual differences' did not 'blur' but, on the contrary, people became more different; people unmasked themselves, both the swine and the saints." The basis of Frankl's theory and therapeutic method is that the essential human need – the need where the human soul recognises itself – is the search

for the meaning of life and moral decisions that manifest in conscience. Rejecting psychoanalysis and biological determinism, he proves that the freedom, and autonomous existence of the soul manifests primarily in moral choices.

Today, there is an existential vacuum. Modern society satisfies only material needs, while neglects the need for meaning. Frankl opines that, instead of Maslow's hierarchy, people often start passionately looking for the meaning of life when all goes wrong. This is what happens to dying patients, survivors of concentration camps and prisoner-of-war camps. In other words, human existence always transcends itself. It points at something or someone beyond, to a meaning that is worth actualising, or to another human life where we find love. When you serve a cause or love someone, you become complete. The more dedicated you are to your task, the more devoted you are to your partner, the more you become a human being, and the more you become truly yourself. That is, you can actualise yourself to the degree you are able to forget about yourself and transcend yourself. Frankl says that the lesson he learnt in Auschwitz and Dachau was that those who were most open to the future, to a task to be performed or a meaning to be actualised, had the best chances of survival. He also mentions an American university student who wrote to him, saying that he had an academic degree, a luxury car, complete financial independence, and had more sex and prestige than needed, and still he was searching. He was wondering if there was meaning in all of those things, and in life as a whole.

As shown above, higher levels of human need, the actualisation of values and their pursuit can be just as strong

as or stronger than maintaining physiological balance. An extreme example is that of martyrs: persons who are willing to lay down their own lives for what they believe. Their example is honoured by all future generations. This is why Hungarians annually commemorate the Thirteen Martyrs of Arad, the generals who were executed for their role in the 1848 Hungarian Revolution.

A 20th-century example for highest-level human motivation are manifestations of civil courage. At this point, to cite a most outstanding example of the highest-level of human needs and motivation in Hungary of recent times, let us mention the story of István Bibó, who was a participant in the 1956 Revolution. His peaceful protest is comparable to that of Mahatma Gandhi. On 4 November 1956, Bibó, the only minister left in the Parliament building, was typing a proclamation for the leading countries of the world. Soviet troops invading the building completely ignored him, mistaking the unshaven, tired man for an office secretary or some other low-level public servant. Upon drafting the letters, he delivered them to the embassies thereby having a profound impact on the course of history. Shortly after he was captured, imprisoned, and silenced. In many ways it was his ideas and courage that Hungary's free society is built on today.

SOCIAL IDENTITY

Social identity is one's place in the common construct of mankind, and the awareness of it. The history of man's presence in the world can be traced back over an

immeasurable amount of time. According to Jung, the impacts of these institutions, in the form of archetypes, are the enormous sources of energy in our souls that can be accessed through symbols. Ancestry and their ancient ways were the main research field of Hungarian psychiatrist Lipót Szondi. He states that the aspirations of these ancestors are clashing in the soul of every individual, and our mental and emotional stability depends on balancing them. Thus, the influences of past and present generations play a role in our creation and our actions. Conscious action requires a knowledge of the past, and the past determines our present. This is why many people are so passionately interested in the distant past, in history, ancient cultures, the arts and their family tree.

In line with this, Émile Durkheim, a French sociologist from the 19th–20th centuries, surmised that the cohesive forces of society are those shared symbols, rites, elements of history, heroes and moral norms which provide a spiritual resource for its members. As Durkheim highlights, religion plays a fundamental role in evoking and actualising these cohesive forces. Interestingly, this holds true for both primitive, illiterate tribes who pass on histories of the tribe and heroes through oral tradition and for the most advanced religions and societies.

Hungarian social psychologist Ferenc Pataki claims that social identity is a complex phenomenon which varies from person to person. One of the components of the self-system is the sense of personal identity that denotes the personal qualities the individual is aware of, such as being smart, successful, beautiful, attractive, and independent.

Personal identity determines a person's scope of action in direct personal relationships. Social identity is another component of the self-system, and reflects the position of the person in the common construct of mankind, above all, in the existing systems of relationships, the most important of them being romantic relationships, the extended family and the relationships with relatives, friends and with ancestors.

The professional identity or vocation is an awareness of what a person does to meet the needs of society. National and ethnic identities or even multiple other identities are also important factors, defining an individual's place in society. The highest -level of social identity pertains to the relationship between man and the cosmos. For Christians, this it is a religious identity that, according to their belief, makes humans aware of their role in relation to the mystical body of Christ.

SOCIAL CAPITAL, TRUST AND RESPONSIBILITY

In modern societies, there are basically two models. One regards social capital, trust and solidarity as primary factors, while the other professes the priority of financial capital and fiscal aspects. The former model (which was the vision of the founding fathers of the European Union, particularly of Robert Schuman) is based on the observance of shared norms and moral principles, on trust and reliability, on the operation of a strong civil society, on the strengthening of social capital. In recent decades,

many studies have proven that social capital is indeed capital, and that its reinforcement is a far better basis for economic development than merely a fiscal approach. The prerequisite of true happiness rooted in the human personality is conditional on belonging to small and extended communities, in trust and long-term vision.

Social capital is an investment which is intended to establish group identity. In light of its goal, it has four definitions: one anthropological, another sociological, one economical and yet another political. The anthropological approach is based on the assumption that cooperation, community, responsibility and trust are basic human needs. Throughout centuries, or even millennia, this need was not challenged, as communities set the framework for human life. This extremely tight-knit community or social network has fundamentally changed in the last three centuries, as a consequence of urbanisation, industrial development and profound social transformation. Thus, the forms of community, its significance, and its modes of cooperation need to be redefined in modern or postmodern societal terms.

The sociological approach starts from the phenomenon of social norms and human motivation, and describes the importance of trust, reciprocity and social networks from this perspective. As mentioned above, the economic approach stresses that cooperation and trust are important economic factors. The representatives in the field of political science, however, emphasise that strengthening social capital is essential for fortifying democracy and

for laying down the foundations of social solidarity and sustainable development.

Social capital differs considerably from financial or human capital in that it is essentially a characteristic of a social group or community rather than the property of an individual. Thus we can talk about the social capital of countries, counties, micro-regions, even towns. Though social capital is a public good possessed by a community to a certain specific extent, its characteristics can also be analysed at the level of the individuals who belong to that given community.

Most definitions of social capital consider trust to be fundamental. Is it an essential component of strong social capital, or the result thereof? One thing is certain: whether it be a cause or an effect, trust is a major determinant of social capital. The importance of trust in others is usually emphasised, but knowing how trustworthy people perceive themselves to be is of equal importance.

Social capital has three dimensions: 1) bonding, based on close family ties and group relationships; 2) bridging, based on relationships with distant friends and colleagues; and 3) networks or linking between various social groups. Proponents of different approaches do not agree if the strong internal cohesion of a closed group which is not open to outsiders should be regarded as social capital. In such groups, the intense internal bonding is not coupled with openness to outsiders; therefore, it is debatable whether this attachment qualifies as social capital. Such a bond characterizes members of terrorist groups, drug networks, or mafia syndicates.

Families, schools and non-governmental organisations are the basic sources of social capital. Primarily, families pass down norms and values to their children, but the schools and local communities also play a decisive role in the later development of community and cooperation skills. Thus, social capital's concept was first described in relevant literature in connection with schools and local communities. As strong social capital is based on the acceptance of common norms and values; therefore, in normless anomic societies, i.e. (in the societies without norms, called anomie) social capital is obviously weaker.

THE ABILITY TO ADAPT

French physiologist Claude Bernard introduced the theory that an organism must be examined as a system striving for homeostasis. (The term "homeostasis" refers to the ability of living organisms to adapt to changing external and internal conditions in order to ensure its own relative biological stability.) As mentioned earlier, drives are states where, due to some unmet need, the organism's homeostasis is thrown off, and the organism makes efforts to restore balance.

As established above, humans (unlike animals) seek more than the mere preservation of their physiological balance. Therefore, human behaviour cannot be examined exclusively from the perspective of the keeping the physiological status quo or the optimisation principle. This is why the concept of allostasis was introduced to describe the balanced state of human beings. The point

is, in order to maintain homeostasis, the body's internal systems remain in a state of constant alteration, regularly adjusting the internal environment.

The term "allostatic load" refers to the overall accumulation of stress because of which an individual is unable to cope with the everyday challenges. For example, there is an allostatic load on a doctor in a rural hospital when he or she is on call three times a week, is increasingly overburdened, and feels unable to maintain mental and somatic balance. Obviously, the maximum bearable workload differs from individual to individual, and the balance can be upset by genetic factors, early childhood events and environmental challenges.

Decision theory models, which are suitable for the scientific analysis of the functioning of humans and their environmental systems, offer the best description on the laws that govern human behaviour – thus, they are best for measuring allostasis as well. In any decision theory model, the basic question of decision theory pertains to the aspects of optimisation. In the interaction of humans and their environment, the individual, and the natural and social environments can be regarded as two players in a game theory model. The environment tries to impose its own expectations and conditions upon the individual, while the individual seeks to shape the environment actively and to achieve goals and values.

The attitudes, values, and psychological patterns of people that are formed during the process of socialisation and impact their way of life function both as drives to regulate behaviour and to maintain physiological balance.

At the same time, the basis of physical and mental balance is that the two levels of motivation should be built on each other, forming an organic structure. Put simply, both the physiological and psychological need to work together. In the modern world, it is unfortunate that in attempting to achieve their psychological goals, people ignore their own physiological needs. An appropriate example of this is the person who works too much commonly called "the workaholic". He drives himself physically too hard for the sake of a psychologically set goal, as the saying goes, only going to the doctor when he is taken by an ambulance.

Needs, especially physiological ones, increase the activation level of the central nervous system, and thus intensify the motivation to mitigate deficits, for example, in satisfying hunger or quenching thirst. Of course, there are significant personality differences in what is perceived as the optimal state of activation. Thrill-seekers prefer a much richer, more filled environment than the introvert. Whereas extroverts are in their element in an eventful environment, like at a party, introverts prefer to be alone, fishing by a lake, staying at home or going to a library. Still, it is possible to determine the individual optimal level at which people feel best and can perform best. An activation level that is less or more than optimal impairs performance; however, humans are capable, with practice, to modify their optimal activation level according to environmental demands. For example, in the exam period, an introverted state of mind facilitates learning efficiency, but during the exam an extroverted state is needed to be able to respond adequately to the social challenge.

This ability to adapt becomes crucial especially in times of crisis. It was observed that in emergency situations about 15% of people behave in a highly rational and purposeful way, 70% become confused and are unable to respond appropriately, and the remaining 15% become completely disoriented and confused so as to seriously compromise their chances of survival. Though the first type is obviously best suited for a paramedic job, this skill can also be developed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONS

There is a close link between motivation and emotion as well: we feel joy when what we want to happen actually occurs, and when it does not, we experience grief and anger, or, when an unpleasant event occurs, we feel anxiety and fear, and when it does not happen, we feel relieved.

The British naturalist Charles Darwin described how emotions play a fundamental evolutionary role in survival. For example, encountering danger and feeling fear triggers a flight reaction, and by expressing fear animals place themselves in a submissive position in the hopes of avoiding attack.

The centres of emotion are found in the early developed structures of the brain, but this does not mean that emotions represent some unpredictable, archaic force. The rationalist way of thinking (that has characterised Western thought since the Greek philosophers) has paid much more attention to the study of thinking and decision-making. Within this framework, emotions appeared almost like

pirates, taking the intellect hostage, and binding it. But this is far from being true.

In general, emotions act as mediators between an ever-changing environment and the individual's behaviour, and, fulfilling a motivational and communicative function, they are therefore irreplaceable in ensuring effective handling of a rapidly changing world. Emotional intelligence is the ability to observe and analyse our and others' emotions, so that the most appropriate behavioural response might be chosen to match a given situation.

THE TWO BASIC TYPES OF INFORMATION PROCESSING

Predisposition to a specific emotion can be a permanent personality trait, so, in this sense, we talk about different types of information processing. Emotions range from positive to negative, i.e.that is, from extreme ecstatic joy to the deepest sorrow. Some people have an optimistic attitude; they are more likely to recall positive events in a new situation from their memory. Others have a pessimistic attitude, and are more likely to recall negative memories. It has been demonstrated that an optimistic attitude is a health determinant. Optimistic people were shown to have a more resilient immune system, while a persistent negative emotional state proved to be an independent health risk factor, particularly for the cardiovascular system.

The human brain has two distinct information processing systems. The first is the reward system, which is related to optimism and success. In a given life situation,

optimistic individuals are more likely to activate positive memories and, therefore, trust that the outcome will be favourable.

Pessimistic persons, in contrast to optimists, excel at imagining eventual adverse events, that is, they anticipate all possible negative outcomes. These two types of information processing are closely related to the two hemispheres of the brain. Evidence shows that the right hemisphere is more suitable for processing negative information, as opposed to the left hemisphere, which is fit for positive information processing. After right hemisphere injuries unrealistic optimism or a tendency to joke are significantly more common– a consequence of the loss or impairment of information processing in the right hemisphere. By contrast, post-stroke depression is significantly more common after injuries in the left hemisphere.

Knowing the individual differences between the two types of motivational and information processing systems has a significant impact on the individual learning outcomes and methods, the nature and type of social interactions, and even on the development of prejudice. Persons of a pessimistic nature more easily develop stereotypes about certain groups of people being dangerous. As a result, they try to avoid such groups, and use any new information to reinforce the already existing negative image, thus maintaining cognitive consistency. In most cases, the two types of information processing are enduring personality traits, that is, they can be influenced but are relatively stable.

THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONS

Within either basic type of information processing, we tend to assess a given situation very differently, depending on the environment and the way we experience it. For instance, in an experiment test subjects were given epinephrine injections, increasing the adrenaline in their systems. Some subjects placed in a room with a euphoric person (an assistant in the experiment) attributed the resulting increased arousal (a general physical state of excitement and alertness) to different emotions than those placed in a room with a seemingly annoyed and angry person also an assistant).

With this in mind, it is clear to see that emotions have a significant impact on all cognitive functions and on the way humans assess or evaluate a situation, given that they affect all psychological activities. The most important of these inlcude:

– attention and perception,
– memory,
– defense mechanisms,
– attitudes and the effectiveness of persuasion and convictions,
– understanding and decision-making,
– interpersonal relationships,
– sense of subjective well-being, quality of life.

The links between attention, perception, and emotions are illustrated by the Kama Sutra, erotic literature regarded as sacred in Hinduism. This connection is most commonly

shown in the Kama Sutra's description of how physical pain inflicted during sexual intercourse may be used to elicit an euphoric emotional effect. An extreme example is masochism or sadism, where suffering or the infliction of pain play a key role in achieving orgasm.

Love is a special form of emotions, wherein which, ideally, all levels of human needs are merged.

EMOTIONS AND PHYSIOLOGY

Extensive studies analyse the physiological response patterns given to each emotion. However, it seems that so far no vegetative response patterns specific to each emotion could be identified. The same autonomic activity (for instance crying or trembling) may occur in different or even opposite emotional states, depending on the cognitive appraisal. According to the still influential emotion theory described by 19th-century U.S. psychologist William James and his Danish colleague Carl Lange, emotions are defined as physiological arousal. This means that human beings do not cry because they are sad, but the other way round: they are sad because they cry. The theory points to the unconscious nature of the first stage of emotion. "You do not run from a bear because you are afraid; you are afraid because you run from a bear", says James to illustrate the initial involuntary nature of the emotions.

The process of appraising the situation consists of two components. The first one is automatic processing, directly linked to behavioural and physiological responsiveness. This is an automatic, rapid and preconscious appraisal.

The second one is controlled processing, which is strategic, slow, continuously changing and conscious. Take fear, for example. When we are too near or standing in the road and see a car approaching, our first automatic reaction is to jump away. The situation triggers immediate physiological responses, such as sweating or increased heart rate. The controlled processing of the second stage is often seen in places like operating rooms, where we choose to control our fear during a painful medical procedure, because we know from past experience that it is necessary.

It has been clearly demonstrated that once the physiological aspects of an emotional state are produced, the individual and his or her environment are tuned to that particular emotional state. It is a fundamental law of the regulation of our own state of mind and that of people around us that negative and positive emotions are equally transmittable or, so to say, psychologically "contagious". Everyone has experienced how a laughter or pleasant joke can ease tension in seemingly unsolvable situations in the family or at work, and how someone chronically in a bad mood can tangibly sour the atmosphere. Thus, consistently displaying certain emotions, verbally and non-verbally, weighs heavily upon human health as well as mood. For patients whose doctors have are optimistic or happy, their recovery rates are significantly better.

Human facial expressions are strong non-verbal signals that correspond to certain emotions universally spanning cultures. The expressions of joy, anger, sorrow, disgust, fear and surprise, along with the recognition of such expressions are innate responses, eliciting the same response from

new-born babies as from adults. In Hungary, Erzsébet Moussong-Kovács and later Péter Molnár and his research team conducted internationally recognised research on new-born babies' innate ability to recognise emotions. However, the cognitive component (or the subjective classification) of emotions changes throughout the course of life; it is true that a new-born baby, an adolescent, and a mature adult all find gratification in very different things.

THE DETERMINING ROLE OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

How does the ability of trust develop in a family? How does a family contribute to the mitigation of hostility? Primal trust is probably the most important concept of modern psychology. The human personality, the human being at birth, is biologically, but especially psychologically extremely immature and vulnerable. This means that the environment of a new-born baby (and even of the fetus in the womb) is critically important from both a biological and a psychological perspective. The mother-child and father-child relationship during the first three years is crucial for the formation of this trust between a child and his or her parents.

At its core, primal trust implies complete surrender between mother and child, and between father and child (given that the father plays a role of equal importance in the child's developmental process). This direct and perfect alignment provides a solid foundation for the unfoldment of the child's development of the personality.

Individuals who have primal trust are brave enough to build long-term relationships, usually daring to be open towards and confide in others. Obviously, this is not blind trust, but rather an openness toward others. This trust builds the confidence to plan for the future and the character that leads to a person being reliable and worthy of trust. Children who grow up in such an atmosphere accumulate an enormous psychological treasure, and assets of personality development. Later they will, with these tools, be able to more easily cope with challenges and be able to establish strong, lasting relationships and friendships.

At a stress conference held in Budapest, Sue Carter, one of the best-known U.S. researchers on early social bonding, spoke eloquently about the biological importance of this first period. In the course of direct physical contact between mother and child a neuropeptide called oxytocin is released, which greatly enriches and enhances brain development. Incidentally, this holds true not only for physical contact in the early period of life. Throughout life, every trusting physical touch, contact, or relationship results in the release of oxytocin, one of the most important anxiety relievers in a person's life, a key anxiolytic medicine. In other words, trust – besides being a major factor in society – has a significant direct physiological and psychological effect.

Studies have shown that couples who embrace, hug, or hold each other frequently (not necessarily in a sexual manner) have much better health stats. Therefore, it is to be concluded that any kind of physical contact based on

trust has a health protective function. In a psychological experiment, a wallet full of money was dropped in the street without the passers-by knowing that they were participating in an experiment. When an experimenter asked the persons who had found the wallet if they had seen a wallet, they were more likely to give it back if the experimenter touched their shoulder while talking to them. Otherwise, they were more likely to keep it.

Therefore, the first and most important investment in any society would be to ensure that mothers and children have an uninterrupted bonding period. Two interesting Hungarian phenomena need to be mentioned in this respect. Firstly, in the 1950s Hungary ranked second in the region in the number of working women (the Soviet Union being the first). It is a progressive, recent development for a woman to be able to work and to engage in meaningful activities other than parenting, but, the fact that women could stay at home with their newborns only for a short period of time, may be a key factor in the very poor health and unfavourable mortality rates of the middle-aged Hungarian population today. Afterwards, Hungary introduced a childcare allowance system and childcare fee system. Discussing the issue extensively with the representatives of the International Monetary Fund; they opined that these systems were rather an outgrowth of sorts from a premature welfare state, while we thought that it was an exemplary experiment Hungary can be proud of, which and is worth preserving for the future.

THE DETERMINING ROLE OF THE FAMILY

As children grow, the extended family also plays a very important role in development. Our surveys found that all self-destructive behaviours mentioned earlier are associated with the individuals' relationship with their parents and also with the extended family and to the amount of support they can expect from their close and distant relatives in difficult life situations.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning Italy as a very positive example for Hungary to follow. Fukuyama calls Italy "a family-friendly society", based on the family structure and family businesses. Historically, family was an economic unit as well, as shown by the life of families of craftsmen, peasants or rural landlords. Yet in the contemporary setting, husband and wife work in different workplaces, while children attend school. Family members do not meet until the evening, which means that they do not have shared activities. In this area, Italy is taking a different path compared to the United States and those other countries which seem to prioritise mobility above all. The ideology of such societies is that children need to construct themselves out of nothing, so to say. But human nature falls more in line with intergenerational cooperation and a certain degree of dependence.

DETERMINING FACTORS OF QUALITY OF LIFE

QUALITY OF LIFE IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Based on an analysis standardised for age and education, young women with children have a worse quality of life than those without children. For men, this concept is reversed: fathers enjoy a better quality of life and better health, and considers themselves more competent, compared to those without children. That is, the results of our research show that women with children are exposed to an immense mental and social overload in Hungary today. The data were adjusted for age and level of education, since people from a less favourable socio-economic background tend to have more children and, in this circumstances, the number of children increases with age, while the health of the individual deteriorates.

The key predictor of the number of children is how much partners can rely on each other in difficult situations. Interestingly, if compared to married couples, the amount of support cohabiting individuals can expect from the partner is an even more important predictor of having a child. Another major factor is the level of other social supports (help from neighbours is particularly important for women). The increased burden and the uncertain situation of parents are indicated by the fact that the level of anxiety is proportional to the number of children for both women and men. Increased anxiety experienced by parents is the responsibility of society. In fact, many think that having children is the parents' personal responsibility, and families receive little compensation for undertaking

(on behalf of all members of the society) the uncertainty and risks involved in raising the next generation. The burden they bear is shown by the fact that the number of hours they work in the weekends increases significantly with the number of children.

There is a noticeable, though feeble correlation between having children, quality of life, and self-rated health conditions for men and women. Relevant data, corrected for age and level of education, show that in proportion to the number of children had women with children rated their ability to work and their quality of life worse than women without children. This suggests that in Hungarian society today having children places a disproportionate burden on young women, as they are increasingly affected by job insecurity and the dual demands of home and work. Therefore, if we want the desired children to be born, this job uncertainty and increased burden experienced by young women should at least be reduced.

As previously stated, this correlation is reversed among young men. Compared to their peers without children, fathers (regardless of age and level of education) rate their health as better, and consider themselves more competent and efficient and are more likely to think that life has a meaning. A positive correlation is detected between the number of children and the importance attributed to religion; nevertheless, the actual way religion is practised correlates with the number of children only for men. Yet no major differences are found in the number of children across various religious groups.

Data controlled for age show that under the age of 45 there is a significant negative correlation between the number of children and the following factors: level of education (especially among women), personal income, family income, car ownership, and one's perception of his or her financial footing. For women, sense of security and control related to work remains in negative correlation with having children even after the data are corrected for level of education. Another factor that reduces the probability of having a child is having a bad boss. In contemporary context, good work conditions also have a negative impact on young women's willingness to have children, because they consider it very risky to give up their jobs, even if temporarily.

PARENTHOOD OR FINANCIAL SECURITY?

It is a sad fact that the financial situation of young people with children in Hungary is significantly worse than that of their peers without children. However, an important factor in this regard is that the highly educated and higher income people have fewer children. Based on level of education, there is a positive connection between personal income and the number of children for men. However, for the same cannot be said of women, since women with children still have significantly lower personal and family income than their male counterparts.

It would be particularly important to help young people have those children whom they wish to have during

their university years, because in today's Hungarian society the conflict between family and career is indeed dramatic in the lives of women. We should therefore not accept that women are disadvantaged in the workplace for having children and for fulfilling their vital role as mothers. This mission of theirs is paramount for society as a whole.

After controlling data for age and level of education, women who would like to have more children are those with a higher family income and those who consider their financial situation to be better than the national average. The same holds true for men: those with a higher income and who consider their financial situation to be better than others also would like more children. For men, however, the number of desired children is much more dependent on personality traits such as competence, efficiency and positive quality of life, while for women, support received from the spouse or partner is of essential in determining the number of children they would like to have. (Obviously, this factor basically determines the attitude of men as well).

While the number of children being born is decreasing continuously, the rate of those who think that they can rely on their children in difficult life situations has risen dramatically. Our surveys show that in 2002, 62% of women felt that they could rely on support from their children in difficult circumstances, compared with 51% of men. It is particularly revealing that between 1995 and 2002 this rate doubled for both men and women.

ENSURING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: THE NORWEGIAN EXAMPLE

In 1978, Norway passed the Gender Equality Act, which provides equal opportunities for both sexes in education and all sectors of society. This also guarantees equal pay for work of equal value, and specifies that each sex shall be equally represented in a body of elected officials comprised of four or more members. Compared to the life expectancy of Hungarian men (68.6 years), Norwegian men live 8.9 years longer. Among others, these equal opportunities policy has contributed to a significant improvement in the life expectancy of Norwegian men. Moreover, the birth rate in Norway is among the best in Europe (even though the population is not growing).

Norway's example demonstrates that if equal opportunity is actually implemented, it can increase fertility rates and may also improve the quality of life and life expectancy for both men and women. The competitive nature of Hungarian men would also benefit from the more complex value systems of women, where family and friends are at least as important as advancement in career and in financial status. However, it is important to emphasize that women have a key role in shaping men's values. As shown by our research results, a major source of persistent stress for men is women's dissatisfaction with their financial situation. The change of value systems must start in the family, and mothers need to educate their sons to value cooperation rather than rivalry.

For processing the changed role of women, it is essential to help parents have all the children they would like to have but have not yet been born. Society must break with the idea that children are exclusively women's business, since parenthood is equally importance for a man's personality development. The decision to have children and the number of desired children are closely related to how much young people can rely on their spouses or partners in difficult life situations. This means that mutual trust, commitment and reliability in the new situation of families is an essential factor in maintaining the stability of relationships. The quality of life of the middle-aged or elderly population is very much determined by how much they can count on their children. This aspect should be emphasised for young people before it becomes too late to have the children they have "postponed".

From this perspective, a comparison with Roma women offers an interesting insight. For them, the number of desired children only slightly exceeds that of non-Roma women, but the actual number of children they have are significantly higher. This means that Roma women decide to have children regardless difficult circumstances. A possible explanation for this is that they see parenthood as the culmination and recognition of their social role, while this concept is less prevalent in the majority society. Consequently, there is an urgent need to enhance the prestige of parenthood and make it a truly common cause for all of us.

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM MORTALITY DATA

In the last decade, researchers have been puzzled by the unresolved issue of what causes the significant difference in morbidity and mortality among developed countries. For example, it is not known how Japan – in spite of its unprecedented industrial and technological development – prevented the occurrence of urbanisation's adverse effects, and how its population's life expectancy has risen more than in any other country in the last 30 years.

A close correlation has been established between gross domestic product and better health status in developing countries of the third world. Similarly, in the first half of the 20th century, life expectancy increased in proportion to economic development in more affluent countries. Since the 1960s, this correlation has gradually weakened in developed countries. Moreover, there is no significant relationship between GDP growth between 1970 and 1990 and the increase in life expectancy. There is significant research, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States, to understand how this "natural experimental situation" can be interpreted, as mortality rates are stable and accurate indicators and reflect the social of changes in the society's health status.

In that regard, our region has come to the forefront of interest, because in the last three or four decades it has displayed opposite trends. In the 1970s, mortality rates of our region have been better than those in the UK or Austria. By the 1980s, Hungarian mortality rates had

become the worst in Europe, with only Russia, Ukraine and Latvia ranking lower. In addition, in today's Hungary more people in the 50–65 age group are dying than in 1930. Meanwhile, in the 1960s, Hungary's indicators were quite favourable, even compared to those of Austria or the UK; therefore, it is not that Hungarian men in general are more vulnerable.

The worsening of Hungarian mortality rates until 1988 cannot be explained by a deteriorating economic situation, since Hungary's GDP increased by 208% between 1960 and 1988. In addition, the financial situation of people (even in the lowest socio-economic class) did not worsen when compared with the 1970s. Nor can mortality rates be explained with the degradation of medical care, since perinatal mortality, regarded as the best indicator of the quality of health care, had been steadily declining during that time. So what has happened in Hungary since 1965? And why do the Japanese live significantly longer than the British?

The British epidemiologist Richard G. Wilkinson concluded that in developed countries (OECD countries) national mortality rates are closely related to social inequality rather than to GDP. American epidemiologist Robert C. Kaplan and his colleagues in the United States came to the same conclusion. In other words, the wider the gap between rich and poor in a country, the higher the morbidity and mortality rates. This means that the best predictor of health is the economic differences within society, rather than the absolute level of wealth. For example, in the United States, the gap is the widest in

Louisiana and Mississippi, where the mortality rate is 9.6 per 1000 inhabitants. In contrast, in New Hampshire and Utah, where the gap is the smallest, the mortality rates are 7.8 and 7.1, respectively. (In Hungary, this indicator was 14.2 in 1995). Inequality within a state is characterised by far more than merely a poor state of health: it is coupled with higher unemployment and higher crime rates, higher rates of work disability, a higher number of underweight newborn babies, as well as a lower rate of persons with higher education qualification and lower amounts allocated to education.

In developed countries, economic differences are related to both mortality rates and morbidity rates. As shown by the Whitehall Study, the health status of a low-level British civil servant is significantly worse than those in higher positions. The association between health status and a relatively lower socio-economic class persists even after the data are standardised for traditional risk factors such as smoking, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle. One of the reasons behind the Hungarian data is that starting in the 1970s people accepted that their value is measured by their ability to buy a better car or a better pair of jeans. The catch was that they had to work more to provide more for the family, in an attempt to raise the family to a higher economic bracket. The men who fell behind in this rat race were weighed down by chronic stress, which eventually led to serious illness and their premature death.

In the framework of our follow-up studies, in 2002 we interviewed 12,600 Hungarian people and then analysed potential predictors of mortality between the ages of 40

and 69. We were particularly interested in the lives of men, since the mortality figures for Hungarian men aged 40–69 were extremely poor. From the sample of men, aged 40-65 in 2002, almost 10% died prematurely. The women's mortality rate was also high, coming in at 3.5%, but still not as high as that of men.

At this point, let us mention but two of the predictors of mortality. The first is the importance of marriage for men. It turned out that marriage is a decisive factor for them. Data corrected as per known risk factors (age, level of education, smoking, alcohol abuse and obesity) show that those men who in 2002 did not have a wife or had a bad relationship with their wife were four times more likely to die between 2002 and the follow-up. An interesting fact detected for women was that their general dissatisfaction with their social relationships was a serious risk factor, but, at the same time, it was a protective factor as well, because they could compensate a problematic relationship with another relationship. Those men who had a bad relationship with their children or had no children were three times more likely to die. Surprisingly and perhaps counterintuitively, for a middle-aged man a good relationship with his children is much more decisive than for women, although we might assume that the opposite is true.

The question arises: why are young men afraid of making a life-long commitment? While young women are usually happy to find a proper partner and get married, young men are very afraid of marriage and it takes time for them to commit. A possible reason for that is that men feel that this decision may involve serious risks. Relevant

studies show that men, in general, tend to have worse emotional intelligence than women, and, therefore, they are less capable to identify who would make a good spouse. They are afraid of the possibility of making a bad choice. For instance, men frequently try to improve their position in the order of dominance. But what does this mean in terms of choosing a life partner? Whom do they prefer? Very often, they choose "posh girls" so that others admire them. It is a basic consideration for many men to choose a woman whom everyone notices when they walk down the street; they want to be envied and feel that they are cool guys. Yet experience shows that posh, made-up women do not necessarily make the best wives, as opposed to those who deserve attention for other, mainly internal qualities.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE JAPANESE HEALTHCARE INDICATORS

Still, the above test results are difficult to interpret within the framework of traditional public health science. Why are lower-ranking English civil servants significantly more likely to develop coronary heart disease when healthcare is accessible for them, and their housing situation and nutrition are adequate? What characteristic differences can be identified between, for instance, the same strata of Japanese and British society? What is the connection between social inequalities and changes in health status and, ultimately, in mortality?

In recent years, leading researchers have dedicated much attention to identifying relative deprivation and straggling

as mediating factors, which can be explained by subjective, psychological, or social relationships, and culture. The analysis of Japanese health indicators found close social relationships and social cohesion significant, which (irrespective of the traditional Japanese low-cholesterol diet) is a major factor in preserving health, especially in terms of cardiovascular diseases and deaths.

Moreover, in the mid-1970s, British medical professor Michael G. Marmot and his American colleague Leonard Syme compared the coronary heart disease rates of middle-aged Japanese men living in the Unites States with those of their peers residing in Japan, and came to the conclusion that mortality rates were many orders of magnitude lower among the population in Japan. In an in-depth epidemiological study of approximately 4,000 Japanese people living in California they found that – besides a low-cholesterol diet – keeping with Japanese culture and community was the key protective factor. Even after data were standardised for traditional risk factors, they again found that the coronary heart disease rates were similar among Japanese people living in Japan and among those residing in California who maintained their Japanese roots, traditions, and communities. Among the most Americanised Japanese men under 45, however, coronary disease rates were five times higher and three times higher than for those over 45. Such differences were also observed in other cultures where tradition was honoured. For example, the low coronary heart disease rates among Italians and Greeks can largely be attributed to cultural identity, social identity and social affiliation.

As shown by the studies discussed above, the sense of cultural and social identity, along with social cohesion, have become a major factor in preserving health in modern societies. When this is in place, the rich are willing to make sacrifices for the community, the stragglers do not feel abandoned in a hostile world. The unique role of Japanese workplaces is a fine example of that. According to the analysis of sociologist Noriko Matsumoto, the secret of "the Japanese miracle" is the fact that former neighbourhood communities were replaced by company communities. In Japan, there is a strong emphasis on group identity and on social stability, a sharp contrast to the individual mindset stressed by the United States and other western nations. Employees have access to medical care at minimal cost, and free or very cheap housing. Shops owned by the workplaces and employees offer goods at low prices. In canteens, employees can enjoy their meals in a friendly environment but can also join recreational programmes, and almost every workplace is equipped with a swimming pool and a gym.

As evidenced by the Japanese example, there are several alternative ways of industrial development, and the Japanese experiment proved to be the most successful in terms better health and economic recovery alike. As Fukuyama highlights, mutual trust, the emphasis on shared values, the acceptance and interiorisation of cultural and social identity brings a high level of social cohesion in Japanese society, which, in turn, serves as the basis for health and economic prosperity alike. Obviously, the Japanese example is rooted in a culture that is markedly

different from ours. Yet the direction of Italian or Greek society, which falls closer to that of Hungary may also be copying.

THE ABILITY OF TRUST

Francis Fukuyama, one of the-best known 20th-century U.S. political scientists stated valid arguments to prove that economic prosperity is stimulated, driven, and sustained by society's ability of trust. Following this line of reasoning, we find that the prerequisite and basis for the creation of the capacity to trust is the family, more specifically, the well-functioning family. It is difficult to imagine a person full of trust without a working family. It follows that if we want to achieve economic prosperity, the most important task is to strengthen the family and its functions that enhance each member's ability to trust and rely on the other.

When claiming that trust is the basis of economic prosperity, Francis Fukuyama does not deny the existence of competition in a well-functioning society. However, those who think that in the American society it is free competition that ensures prosperity do not understand Western societies and economics. Without trust, competition creates a situation where "man is a wolf to man", that is, where every man is for himself trying to take advantage of the other. In business life in the Unites States, mutual trust and credibility are the foundation. Essentially, it is a mutual consensus (agreement) between parties rather than law that drives business transactions

and causes economic growth. Through keeping these agreements, one can gain more credibility and trust, but to breach such agreements is harshly punished. Those who lose their credibility due to broken agreements are excluded from business circles – become blacklisted.

In recent years, trust has also become a basic concept in behavioural sciences, healthcare and psychology. Interestingly, and as is usually the case in healthcare, its definition was given from a negative perspective. Today, the concept of hostility is fundamental in the specialised literature of behavioural science, given that a hostile attitude has been found to be the key behavioural risk factor for cardiovascular diseases. And a hostile attitude is defined as lack of trust. The most important question of the hostility questionnaires of the relevant survey is: "to what extent do you agree with the statement that the safest is not to trust anyone?" Everyone should would profit from introspection and answering that question.

Our surveys show, a hostile attitude and a lack of trust are the main detrimental factors driving failing health and self-destructive behaviours such as alcoholism, drug abuse or suicide attempts. Consequently, if we seek to improve the health of Hungarian people, then, first and foremost, we must change hostile attitudes.

Paradoxically, when a person has a hostile attitude, it does not mean that he or she is hostile. Hostile people, when asked, will not think that they are hostile, but will say that the world, in general, is a wicked place, everyone is selfish, nobody can be trusted, and this is why they react with hostility, close in on themselves and do not dare

to open up. The fact that in the United States hostility control trainings are organised for managers on a regular basis shows that hostility is an important issue not only as far as health is concerned but in economics as well.

In today's Hungary, a key intervention targeted at the protection of society and at economic recovery would be to offer such trainings all over the country. For instance, if managers do not generally trust their colleagues and expect negative things to happen, then, obviously, they will get such responses. Indeed, they will not be able to trust their environment, which then results in a much lower efficiency; in addition, they are demonstrably exposed to greater cardiovascular risks as they regularly find themselves in adverse stress situations or conflicts they perceive to be unsolvable.

HUMAN ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE

Do we live to work or do we work to live? This is an anthropological dilemma all human beings face throughout their life. The issue arises in the micropsychology of our daily lives as well as in the context of social coexistence. Most probably, activity is a basic human need. A specific aspect of activity is the concept of performance, which then can be narrowed down to the phenomenon of work performance, and finally to the social category of gainful activity.

As evidenced by classical sociological statistical data, people are motivated to work by three main things: the need to earn a livelihood, the need for personal development and

the need for social integration. In fact, these motivations cover three major fields of human existence in a complex web of individual and social aspects.

This also means that the job satisfaction factor is an essential component of an overall contentedness with life. Consequently, it plays a key role in keeping us healthy just as its opposite – job dissatisfaction – is an obvious risk factor for morbidity. The subjective factor may be of crucial importance, since the different work relationships, personal working conditions and job descriptions can make a person like work or hate it.

In the modern world of work, one of the main risk factors for morbidity is possibly the overload or exhaustion of the bio-psychosocial adaptative capacity. Another risk factor is unemployment, which can be a catalyst for chronic stress. Losing a job may often lead to severe grief responses, especially if the job was satisfactory in terms of all the three main motives. As Lennart Levi, an internationally recognised Swedish expert in work-related stress research aptly describes it in the title of a book commissioned by the European Union: *Guidance of work-related stress: Spice of life or kiss of death?* In other words, work may give life meaning, but can also strip it of meaning.

WORK AND PERSONALITY

Employees exist in a "dual world" of work: parallel to the structure of the external world of the job, there is an internal world of their own making. Many authors who discuss the formative role of work speak of the concept

of occupational personality. Largely founded on basic personality types, researchers described the occupational personality types as follows:

1. Realistic.
2. Investigative.
3. Artistic.
4. Socially helpful.
5. Enterprising.
6. Conventional.

Another approach is to describe a person's professional life and lifestyle. Relevant specialised literature specifies types along the following individual "guidelines":

1. Independence: works without a boss or outside organisation as a freelancer;
2. Human relationships: family; home; co-workers as friends, adaptive in work; working relationships are not important.
3. Career: only progress matters; performance-oriented; work is prioritised above all.
4. Achieving social goals: career and financial aspects are subordinated to social goals.
5. Mixed/contradictory type: partly passive, partly struggling, partly resigned, evasive and uncertain.

In modern corporate HR development strategies, compatibility of the given job and the personality of the recruit are important aspects. This means that, in addition to professional expertise, there are other competency indicators which are significant in the selection process. Various concepts have been developed to explore these issues. One of these is the description of

"key competences", a way of describing and assessing personality traits that are more or less general work requirements.

Another indicator of the inner world of work is the subjective experience of work. This experience is multidimensional, being influenced by the individual's personality, biology, work experience, family background, and socio-cultural factors. This dimension of experience is accurately represented by the AVEM test, which examines the patterns of work-related experience and behaviour. It is simple to use and, therefore, it can be used in everyday psychotherapeutic practice for diagnostic purposes and to support the therapeutic process. The test uses the following dimensions:

– subjective importance of work,
– work-related ambition,
– work until burnout,
– being a perfectionist, maximalist,
– distancing ability,
– quitting after failure,
– proactive problem-solving,
– inner calm and balance,
– success orientation,
– satisfaction with life,
– social integration and option to ask for support.

One of the principles of management theory is that effective and satisfying work is best achieved through the interplay of different basic types of thinking - rational, empirical, emotional or intuitive as defined by Gustav Jung.

THE SUPPORTIVE FAMILY AS THE BASIS OF POSITIVE QUALITY OF LIFE

FAMILY AS A FACTOR IN PRESERVING HEALTH

In recent decades, we have been forced to reconsider seemingly obvious concepts whose values have long gone unchallenged. For centuries, marriage and family have been considered the foundation of the civilised world. The legal systems of modern European states and the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly provides special protection for the family and marriage. Experience shows, however, that marriage and family are consistently being devalued not only in Hungary but also in the most developed, most financially secure societies like the Nordic nations.

Therefore, we must ask: are family and marriage of importance for Hungarian individuals and society at large, in the 21st century, and, if so, why? In psychology, Erikson's personality development model founds an individual's personality development upon his ability to overcome crises. This basis holds true for whole societies as well. When talking about crises, each one has two possible outcomes: regression, when the individual is unable to cope with the challenges, or attempts made to understand the essence of the crisis so that we overcome it and emerge from it stronger, as we discussed earlier. In marriage or family, a crisis may highlight which parts of the relationship are essential and which ones ought to be done away with. Therefore, in a way, we should indeed welcome and embrace crisis, because it forces us to leave our comfort zone and face reality.

There are those who claim that family is unnecessary; by claiming so, they are in fact attacking the traditional model discussed earlier, which has become formal, devoid of meaning and is based on economic and other interest, and which (along with the children growing up in it) was institutionally protected by society for long. (In Italy, for instance, divorce was not allowed until the early 1970s.) The only question is whether in the context of fighting for women's rights it is acceptable to claim that marriage and family are necessarily means to oppress women and that, as some feminists opine, the liberation of women must entail the elimination of the institutions of marriage and family. If we examine the issue based on scientific considerations, from a biological, psychological and sociological perspective, rather than on the basis of emotions and prejudices, we must conclude that family has never been of a more important role in the quality of life and psychological balance of the individual and of the future generation or in the creation of a tolerable social atmosphere than in today's modern society. But to this end, we must remove every insignificant detail of what we call family and marriage, and must make their point very clear. Prejudices about family and marriage are equally prevalent among the elderly and the young. Arguing about prejudices is the surest way to provoke resistance and to start trench wars – and this is what happens all too often these days.

LIFE-LONG COMMITMENT

What are the main criteria along which it is possible to define the real significance of marriage and family? In this incredibly fast-changing, highly complicated and alienated modern life and society, emotional security is more important than ever. Yet this security is rooted in mutual life-long mutual commitment and unconditional trust. In a relationship between two adults and, after that, between parents and children, life-long commitment, unconditional trust and dedication constitutes the very essence of marriage and family. To put it in another way: individuals who are capable of such a relationship have at least set out on the path to self-fulfilment, self-actualisation and a positive quality of life.

The independent, voluntary decision which is the basis of choosing a partner is of paramount importance. Only such a decision can serve as a starting point for the development of a relationship which survives all crises and difficulties. It lays the foundation for a friendship or acquaintance to transform from simply attraction into a deeper, more meaningful relationship. After all, this relationship is meant to be a shared adventure, a voyage of discovery, where the man and woman involved can learn to rely on and trust each other through life's swells and troughs. This growing-to-trust process is the basis for family cohesion, which gives the experience of real freedom. Otherwise, uncertainty and doubt undermine even the most promising relationships. Unconditional trust necessitates (after an initial firm decision) life-

long intention, determination, mutual attention and development.

Yet, in reality, most marriages are not like that, and the main reason for this is the ambiguous perception of the image of marriage. On the one hand, we see the prejudices and empty forms of those sticking to stiff, traditional marriage. On the other hand, we see a pattern of relationship based on the principle of consumption, which regards emotions as consumer goods or a bargaining tool, and projects a process where those who are smart enough can replace their old partners with a better one. There is ample data to underline the catastrophic consequences (behavioural, emotional and health-related ones) of the inability to recognise and, above all, apply these basic laws of psychology.

It is to be noted that, contrary to what is preached by commercials and TV programmes, love does not have to die out or fade away with time. This only happens when partners are unaware that they have drifted apart or when they have realised the distance but still do not try to bring new colours and playfulness to their relationship. Of course, there are ups and downs in life. But this is exactly when we must free each other from the demons that invade the human soul: worry and anger. A genuinely good, fulfilling and interesting relationship is a major health protector, the absence of which is a stronger detrimental factor than smoking or alcohol abuse (and it must be added that a good relationship offers protection against smoking and alcohol abuse). The only exception is perhaps obesity,

as men living in a good marriage are said to be more likely to put on weight.

FAMILY COHESION AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Based on the results of Hungarostudy 2002, we examined the relationship between the social support from family members and certain indicators of the quality of life. First, we analysed the survey population for the significance of trust and the sense of belonging in a family. As quality of life is significantly influenced by age, sex and level of education, we controlled the data for these factors. Partial correlation coefficients then showed whether and to what extent each quality of life indicator correlates with social support from family, irrespective of level of education, age and sex.

Since the role of the family is chief among youth, we examined whether the quality of life for men and women under the age of 45 depends on the social support received from their families.

All psychological, quality of life indicators, along with a self-rated health status were significantly better among those who felt they could rely on their family members in difficult times. For this particular analysis, we examined the level of support from parents, spouses, cohabiting partners, children and relatives altogether. We found in both the total sample and among men under 45 that support from their family affirmed, above all, the sense of life's meaning and coherence. For women, good family

atmosphere offered protection mainly against depression and hopelessness. Self-rated health statistics were markedly better, regardless of age, sex and level of education, among those who could rely on family members. Efficacy and competence among men under 45 was strongly related to social support from family, while there was no significant correlation among women under 45.

Among the psychological factors driving quality of life in the sample, hostility was the most dependent on family atmosphere. The markers in both men and women under 45 show that poor home atmosphere and a low level of social support lead to significantly higher levels of hostility. As this is common among young people as well, it can be assumed that the quality of relationship with family is cause and hostility the effect.

In other chapters of our book we discuss the fact that hostility in itself is a significant risk factor, a fundamental determinant of poor quality of life, and that individuals with a hostile attitude do not perceive themselves as hostile, but see everyone around them as mean, selfish, and unworthy of trust. On a social scale, a hostile attitude is a key component of mistrust and the lack of social capital. For young men, anomie, value crises, and the inability to plan long-term are very much dependent on family atmosphere, while the cooperative skills and community efficiency of young women are strengthened by family support. (The term "anomie" denotes a societal condition where shared values and norms are weakened, and the society's regulatory impact is absent or insufficient. In such conditions, individuals may come to believe that they

can succeed only if they break rules and laws, which may be lucrative in the short run but also indicates lack of purpose and direction. Although, anomie may even act as a health preserving factor as it may inspire individuals to think that if they can adapt to their disadvantageous situation, they may succeed. As a whole, however, the internal conflict resulting from anomie is definitely harmful.)

Self-destructive behaviours are closely related to the lack of social support from one's own family. In the total sample, (regardless of age, sex and level of education) smoking, suicide attempts, drug (marijuana) and alcohol abuse are more common among individuals with poor family backgrounds. When young men felt they received little support from family, they were more prone to smoke marijuana, be depressed, to attempt suicide and to consume hard drinks. For young women, suicide attempts, marijuana use and the number of cigarettes consumed daily correlated with a bad relationship with the family. Quite interestingly, both smoking among young men and drinking among young women do not show significant connection to the lack of family support. The impact of friends and peer groups appears to be more dominant in the case of these two addictions. In summary, what does this say of Hungarian people?

Overall, the vast majority of Hungarian society (86.5%) feels that they can rely on family in difficult situations, with only 13.5% saying that this is less typical or not true at all. The deterioration in quality of life is highly cumulative in this 13.5% of Hungarian society.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE UNWILLING TO MARRY

Nowadays, young people (albeit acknowledging the importance of family in theory) think that relationships are their most personal matter and do not think that marriage is important. But what is the essence of marriage? An explicit commitment which marks the end of a stage in life: the period of searching for a partner. The partners commit in the presence of those who are the closest to them. Rites have a major role in the organisation of human society. For example, it is no coincidence that people become doctors at the moment when their degrees are handed over to them. Those young people who reject the rite of marriage resist the self-identity that evolves as a result of the finality of choosing a partner. Today, it is a worldwide phenomenon that the maturation of the personality takes longer and the adolescent search for identity takes decades, which is also reflected in the process of choosing a career and a partner.

Choosing a partner is more important than ever; all the more so because very much depends on the personal and voluntary commitment which eventually results in a successful relationship. Marrying someone without being aware of this fact leads to severe personal traumas and a sense of failure. When people enter into marriages prematurely, rashly and without commitment, they often divorce over time, which is a symptom of the current crisis of marriage that is at least as serious as the postponement of taking up responsibility.

Women are extremely vulnerable in cohabiting relationships, that is, in forms of partnership which are not recognised by a social contract (marriage). It is a biological and psychological fact that women desire to have children much more than men and at an earlier age, even though at a later stage, children provide a larger emotional enrichment to man. In a marriage, the rights of the woman and children are protected by contract, while partners in an informal cohabitation can, at any time, break the promises they made only between themselves. Very frequently, individuals, after living for years in cohabitation, find "the right one" and the abandoned partners get into an even more difficult situation than they would after an equally traumatic divorce, with their self-esteem even more seriously damaged.

MARRIAGE AS THE MOST PERSONAL MATTER OF PARENTS

The marriage and starting a family of a young couple are, at the same time, the most personal matter of their parents and grandparents, although young people are seldom aware of it. Today, nothing may worry parents more than how their children succeed in finding a spouse. It is not by chance that weddings are the biggest celebrations in the life of a family. Getting married is one way that young couples shoulder the burden of responsibility for their own future. Marriage is also a rite of mutual acceptance between the two families. When two young people undertake to have

children, they commit to making the genes of the two families – their parents and grandparents – meet.

World-famous Hungarian endocrinologist and psychologist Lipót Szondi, in a test later named after him, examined how "our ancestors struggle" in our genes. The diversity and variety of genes may ensure the personality's high degree of flexibility, which is one of the biggest assets of a multi-ethnic Hungarian society. Young people, when rejecting marriage, often reject to identify with their own ancestors or with their partner's ancestors. This phenomenon, which Szondi calls "chained ancestors", leads to serious disorders in self-identity.

Interestingly, albeit marriages regularly fail in today's society, the wedding is still considered as a unique celebration of joy.

Szondi relates how, at a very young age, he saw in his own family that choice was often controlled by the family or inheritance, and found that such choices shape the individual's fate. He adds that he realised, also at a young age, that of all living beings only humans are able to become aware of the fate imposed on them by their family, and that is the core of human dignity. Humans carry the enormous burden of human existence, Szondi continues, when they have to undertake the task of choosing between destiny as pre-arranged by family and what they were born with., The most amazing feat is when one tries to bridge the gap between the two in an effort to resolve the conflicts between freedom and necessity in destiny. As Szondi asks, citing the example of his own life: where else could he have come to this conclusion more easily than in a family where

he experienced and observed the fortunate or unfortunate lives, carreer choices, illnesses and deaths of twelve siblings.

THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF FAMILY

Marriage and family are the most personal matter of the couple and their parents and grandparents, but, at the same time, have never been more important for the society. In the next century, the single greatest risk will be the growing prevalence of personality disorders and behavioural disorders among young people who grow up without trusting anyone. These "prisoners of hate", as the renowned American psychiatrist and neurologist Aaron T. Beck calls them, when in a state of mind of hostility and loss of trust, an epidemic of aggression, aimless destruction and self-destruction.

Human beings are born in a biologically and psychologically immature state. If we fail to ensure the basic conditions for the psychological development of newborn babies and young children, we expose them to the risk of becoming human beings incapable of love, reciprocity or trust, who fall an easy prey to manipulation and will live their life aimlessly and unhappily. All statistical data show that depression, anxiety and drug abuse have become the most critical health and social problems in civilised societies. Such problems are orders of magnitude more common among children in institutionalised care; children of divorced parents are also at increased risk. Therefore, when highlighting the importance of family, we first and foremost must cite a natural law: a child's personality

development is conditional on a loving environment, and, with regard to the fulfilment of his or her personality, the greatest protection is ensured by mutual relationship based on trust.

In the course of personality development, the symbiosis between mother and child results in the ability to trust, while the absence of such a symbiosis leads to the lack of the same ability. If such a relationship develops, the child will grow up to be capable of reciprocity; otherwise, he or she will be condemned to being closed within his or her personality. This trust protects human beings against all external difficulties, provided that they are able to give and receive. In contrast, humans react to the absence of this trust with an incessant feeling of vulnerability and anxiety. Hungarian psychiatrist Imre Herman was the first to describe the critical role of the bond between mother and child, but its physiological and psychological significance became widely known through the attachment theory of English psychiatrist John Bowlby.

For instance, animal experiments evidenced that, despite adequate feeding, one in every two rats separated from their mothers at the age of 14 days died before reaching the age of 100 days due to some minor (mostly viral) infection. In contrast, the rate was very low among rats which grew up with their mothers. Furthermore, chemically induced tumours grew significantly faster in rats of the former group. It must be noted that human infants are much more vulnerable than newborn rats, and their psychological maturation (in which the mother-child

relationship and the whole family play a critical role) is significantly slower than their physiological maturation.

The relativisation of the value of trust-based and lasting human relationships is a mistake and stems from manipulations which are in contrast with the development of the human personality. Such relativisation, in turn, leads to a hostile attitude. Modern psychology and psychiatry describe the hostile attitude not only as a major psychological risk factor but also as a critical health risk factor. As discussed above, the most serious consequence of a poor family atmosphere is the development of hostility.

NARCISSISTIC CHILDREN

Today's psychological theories have acknowledged the significance of the early mother-child relationship. Indeed, it is one of the essential factors in the prevention of personality disorders, but not the only one. An adverse consequence of the principles of modern parenting (and a frequent result of overworked and exhausted parents) is that the complete and uncritical acceptance of every aspect of the children, without any criticism, who are surrounded with excessive love that spoils the child. But this is what makes them develop a narcissistic personality. These children grow up with no other purpose than to indulge themselves. Since those around them try to satisfy all their needs immediately, they do not learn the joy of discovery and overcoming difficulties, the ability to play independently, and fail to learn long-term thinking and planning. These abilities form basis of a stable positive

emotional state. In absence of these abilities and skills, boredom and emptiness (purposelessness) may set in, the two prerequisites for negative thinking and a constant unquenchable thirst for external stimuli. In contrast, education aims at the formation of a realistic self-image, psychological goals and attitudes, which requires constant feedback from the family, the extended family and the wider community, along with the development of a socio-cultural sense of identity.

Among young people today, personality disorders characterised by emptiness, disappointment, boredom, risk-seeking for itself and inability to form lasting relationships have become highly prevalent. This is the so-called borderline personality disorder, a most frequent and tragic result of dysfunctional families and the related global experiment. Many parents and young people suffer from intense and long-lasting conflicts making each other's lives miserable. and this condition can develop irrespective of their financial situation. The critical nature of the situation is clearly shown by how many young people in the civilised world are becoming addicted to drugs, committing suicide, joining gangs and committing murder, joining extremely dangerous cults or simply drift aimlessly in life. No atomic bomb or environmental pollution could present a more serious threat to the survival of mankind.

It is not stressed properly that while children born into a family which can ensure the conditions for their physical and mental development must be seen as the most effective investment for society, children born into the absence of such conditions may be a most serious source of long-term

risk. Primarily, the development of a child's personality does not depend on the material conditions. Studies conducted in both the United States and Hungary show that drug problems are especially severe among children raised in institutional care and children in the richest families where they can get everything they want, but, if their parents do not have time to offer personal attention, they may become empty, narcissistic persons.

FAMILY AND SCHOOL EDUCATION

All over the world, attempts are made to introduce the subject of family life education in schools. Due to a fatal misunderstanding of the real role of the family, within the framework of the subject, young people in most cases are given sexual education, being introduced to sexual techniques and positions. It is typical that this educational programme only deals with the importance of marital fidelity to reduce the spread of AIDS. But a voluntary decision on life-long commitment is far more important today than it used to be when society forced young people to commit.

In the school system of today's Hungary, where pupils have to acquire an immense amount of knowledge, all educational researchers detect huge gaps compared to the Anglo-Saxon school systems in two areas: (1) the development of problem-oriented problem-solving skills, and (2) the development of practical skills, especially communicative and cooperative skills.

The two areas are closely linked, and family life education can be effective only if it is based on these two

principles. Students do not need abstract knowledge, but practical communication and conflict resolution skills, know-how that is indispensable in family as well as all communities. It is sad to see how relationships fall in the trap of the games that partners play with the best intention.

As Canadian psychiatrist Eric Berne writes in his book *Games People Play*, "A Game is an ongoing series of complementary ulterior transactions progressing to a well-defined, predictable outcome. Descriptively it is a recurring set of transactions, often repetitious, superficially plausible, with a concealed motivation; or, more colloquially, a series of moves with a snare, or 'gimmick'. Games are clearly differentiated from procedures, rituals, and pastimes by two chief characteristics: (1) their ulterior quality and (2) the payoff. Procedures may be successful, rituals effective, and pastimes profitable, but all of them are by definition candid; they may involve contest, but not conflict, and the ending may be sensational, but it is not dramatic. Every game, on the other hand, is basically dishonest, and the outcome has a dramatic, as distinct from merely exciting, quality.

It remains to distinguish games from the one remaining type of social action which so far has not been discussed. An operation is a simple transaction or set of transactions undertaken for a specific, stated purpose. If someone frankly asks for reassurance and gets it, that is an operation. If someone asks for reassurance, and after it is given turns it in some way to the disadvantage of the giver, that is a game."

Starting in kindergartens, curriculum should entail the experience of cooperation being more efficient than

defeating the other person. This is the approach which ensures that neither of the party loses but both parties gain more. The most efficient methods to improve these skills include sports, performances, and using the tools of drama pedagogy. It is no coincidence that the sports teams and drama circles in schools are the pillars of the English educational system.

To ensure the most efficient development of these skills, a practical programme should be developed for all levels of the school system that taps into the creativity of kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers. Teacher training and kindergarten teacher training have a critical role to play in this programme, which means that programmes should start there.

Given its decisive role, nothing can substitute the family in raising children. But in modern society conflict resolution skills, health maintenance patterns and the strength of interpersonal relationships correlate mostly with level of education. So, to ensure children's future and personal development, families must be supported in their efforts to give their children proper education. The most important investment of parents and the biggest gift they can give to their children is to do everything they can to ensure a proper education.

Every effort must be made to promote cooperation between families and schools. Quite often, families also gain access to a new social network and emotional support when they get acquainted with each other and participate in joint programmes. In many cases, such networks continue to exist even after the children finished school.

Nowadays, when local communities gradually weaken, such natural forms of organisation have a major impact as they enhance social cohesion.

A well-functioning family is always open to the society, because it is the skills practised within the family, along with mutual openness and acceptance, that make individuals able to join the wider community. A closed and defensive family which reacts with hostility to the outside world evokes the times of medieval family wars. Today, when the institution of the family is endangered, cooperation is greatly needed. The National Association of Large Families in Hungary (NOE), established with the first major legislative act after the fall of communism in Hungary, is a globally unique example for such cooperation. This is an example Hungary can be rightly proud of.

DEVELOPING CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

Every family and relationship has tensions, difficulties and conflicts. This is not a problem at all; quite the contrary, as we pointed out above, relationships develop through the overcoming conflicts and difficulties. The ways of resolution vary greatly. For instance, the denial of the very existence of conflicts is one of them, even if not very efficient. Most importantly, we need to become aware of the fact that problem-free relationships do not exist and conflict resolution skills can be acquired and taught. Conflict resolution is a skill like cycling or swimming, only much more important.

Of course, there are big differences between different people, meaning that each deals with conflict differently. Some engage in conflicts in a dramatic and explosive way, while others may find it difficult to express their feelings. It is a rule of psychology that conflicts, if handled properly, can be a driving force for growth in partners, spouses, parents and children.

Children learn how to resolve conflict from their parents, therefore, we often see a caricature of the parents' behaviour in their children. Parents who cope with difficulties by emotional eating, drinking, or taking sedatives, should not be surprised to see that their school-aged children do the same. In contrast, children of parents who become emotionally rigid to deal with conflict may reject their parents' method of problem solving, opting for rebellion and emotional conflict resolution methods which their parents strictly prohibit.

Therefore, when developing these conflict management skills, special attention must be paid to the maladaptive coping mechanism children bring from their families. For, what the children learn from their parents, they are very likely to copy, even if those problem-solving methods might be harmful. The circle of self-destruction must be broken! Statistics show that adult children of divorced parents often opt for divorce themselves, even after determining that they will not repeat their parents' mistakes. Our studies have also shown the correlation that young people who were physically abused at home are significantly more likely to find and choose a partner who will abuse them. The pitfalls of poor conflict resolution

methods are relatively easy to identify, and, thankfully, can be unlearned, albeit with some difficulty. Skill development group activities, when conducted appropriately, can release a lot of emotion. The key point is that teachers must never humiliate participants but rather must lead the groups in a constructive way.

Children practice resolving conflicts while they play, working out problems that emerge from living together, and thus prepare for adult life. It is extremely important to try and set the process on the right course. At the same time, children see their parents as experimental subjects of coping with the outside world and of the conflicts between authority and rebellion. We adults should not be offended by such close scrutiny; on the contrary, we need to welcome their curious, observant eyes and give children as many opportunities as possible to play those games that they will engage in throughout their adult life.

For adolescents, the two parents play different roles. Parents must accept and adolescents must realise these alternating roles, given that in some situations the parent of the opposite sex is needed, while in others, the parent of the same sex. It is essential the we always make children feel that, no matter what the conflict is, we will always stand by them and support them, even if we disapprove of their behaviour or disagree with their point of view. We must never allow the parent-child relationship to break down completely. Children must always be offered a way back in. Even if it is temporarily difficult for us to bear when children pull away, if we sever the connection, they will find their way back to us.

Honesty is an irreplaceable component in every relationship. Though we should feel free, at all times, to communicate our feelings to our partners and family members, during a fight we should resist the urge to always have the last word. A constructive discussion can be very useful, provided that our intention is to change or do away with a phenomenon or behaviour that undermines the relationship. We should be seeking to understand and restore, to change and grow, rather than to attack and destroy.

After the emotional side of the issue is dealt with, practical solutions and problem solving are needed. Once the problem has been understood, a solution should be decided upon and targeted action should be taken. The result is that we emerge from conflicts and difficult situations as different persons or one unified and changed family.

Asking for help is another important way of conflict resolution within the family; it enhances cohesiveness. Many people, especially men, are willing to offer help, but find it more difficult to ask for and accept help. We must learn (and teach others) to ask for help, to accept it gladly and to show gratitude even for the smallest acts of help. The Japanese think that persons who can give are more beholden and thus should be grateful, because, through giving, they become spiritually enriched. It is indeed true as many decide not to ask for help so that they do not have to be grateful or beholden. Yet gratitude and accepting help are also a key skill for enriching human relationships, which can be acquired, developed, learnt and taught. Becoming

aware of the fact that we do need our partners, parents, children and relatives and that without them we could hardly overcome difficulties is an important formative and cohesive force.

Many recent studies have focused on successful and healthy ageing. As evidenced by the results of large scale follow-up studies, a prerequisite for successful ageing is that the elderly have someone to give to. Grandparents can play a major role in today's overworked, often broken or fragmented families provided that they are given the opportunity to help. Very often, it is a grandparent or another elderly relative who can effectively give the child the love and attention the parents fail to provide. One of the key lessons from our survey results is that the social support received from family adds up, and it is the cumulative value that determines quality of life.

THE FAMILY IS NOT A BED AND BREAKFAST

Currently, the most difficult task facing us is to ensure that families can perform their original function, with the members supporting one another, and become true and effective communities of life, rather than just being a place to resupply before moving on - a 'bed and breakfast' of sorts. The elements of a full-fledged, efficient community of life are stable emotions and a balance of problem solving and task completion, intimacy and common activities done together. Knowing these, how can this be achieved and made reality in Hungary today?

One aspect is emotional attunement, love and tenderness. For most marriages, this is the starting point, as young people are rarely forced to marry nowadays. However, the natural common functions that families used to have throughout history (such as working together, shared work and activities) have by now become difficult to realise. Consequently, the family becomes a bed and breakfast instead of a home. This process may partially be reversed with flexible working hours, the use of home computers and the growing number of family enterprises.

It is only natural that husbands or wives who love their profession do not remain indifferent to their colleagues who have an insight into professional issues and work hard with them day by day. And this is all the more true if their spouse does not know or understand the world of their profession. Our entire legal system should be reviewed to see whether it supports the unity of the family or works against it, because there are still many regulations that make it difficult for families to hold together and for spouses to work together and cooperate.

Trusting and accepting the partner in itself will not suffice; it offers a solid basis only. A relationship that does not develop will inevitably regress. Discovering how we differ and playing on our strengths is at least as important as expanding our professional knowledge at the workplace. We cannot be called an expert without reading up on and being aware of the new methods and procedures within our profession. Similarly, we must always, as much as possible, listen to our spouses and children, and learn how to respond to their development, their needs and desires.

This is what can over time make being in a family either heaven or hell. Hell in marriage is not only divorce, but monotony and lack of joy. In the context of family life education, the development of emotional intelligence can strengthen interpersonal skills, indispensable for choosing, developing and building a relationship with a partner, for resolving conflicts, and raising children.

MATERIAL SUCCESS AS A THREAT TO VALUE

Foreigners, when asked about how they perceive Hungarians, tend to mention their resilience and performance motivation, as shown by the example of Hungarians moving to Western countries. Indeed, these characteristics seem to be important qualities of the Hungarian nation. But if individuals feel that they are unable to meet their own expectations, the very same qualities may bring about hopelessness or a sense of failure. These days, this is very prevalent among the elderly and in those regions where many people have lost their jobs in a short period of time. In the context of the value crisis, it is common for people to think that a person is valuable only if he or she achieves external success in life. Objective indicators show that, today, parents who rear their children in an emotionally rich environment contribute to society at least as much as any scientist or businessman. Elderly persons who show with their life that it is possible to maintain serenity and balance at an old age, even when ill or in pain, represent just as much or even more value than those who take advantage of others

in order to become wealthy. This distortion of values, that is, accepting regarding financial success as a value or even as a standard is the most serious deficiency in the failing of today's Hungarian self-image today.

The idea that material success being more valuable is not equally characteristic of all social strata. For instance, it is less prevalent among intellectuals than among the less educated, and, interestingly, the correlation between an unfavourable financial situation and poorer health is weaker among them. Because of social expectations, men tend to suffer more due to decline in their financial status than women do. This phenomenon is an important background factor in the health deterioration of middle-aged Hungarian men. At the same time, within families, women's role within the family is a key determinant of how men experience the decline in their financial status: women's high expectations have been clearly shown to act as factors detrimental to men's health.

The studies we conducted among the Hungarian population indicated that a relatively unfavourable socio-economic situation leads to health deterioration only if experienced, in a hopeless and self-abandoning state of mind, as a downward spiral, a failure. Much more difficult situations, such as poverty after World War II, did not result in health deterioration. It is established, especially among the elderly, that a realistic value system and self-esteem can maintain a better quality of life and better health even in significantly worse financial situations. According to our research data the key predictor of a better quality of life in old age is seeing oneself in a better light.

THE ROLE OF MASS COMMUNICATION IN TODAY'S FAMILIES

In the second half of the 20th century, whether we like it or not, a new family member arrived – connectivity through technology. Just as the village or the town was involved in family life, a broader world appeared in our homes. Mankind was "unified", globalized even, through mass communication. It is an extraordinary opportunity for humanity to experience this unity using modern technology. In reality, however, mass communication hardly makes use of its unique potential for personality development.

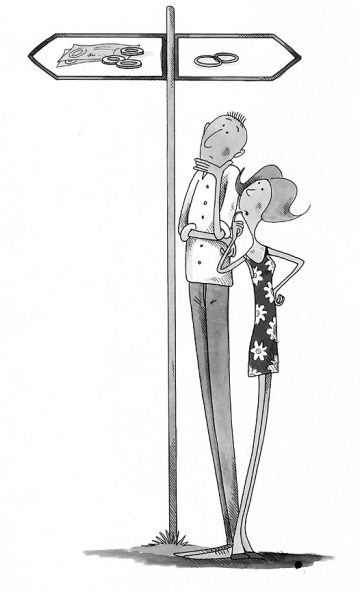
Mass media should raise awareness of the fact that within the limitations of our individual possibilities and abilities, all of us are responsible for our world and for its survival. Whether we like it or not, mankind has become capable of destroying itself, and a critical task of education and families is to be responsible for (and teach children how to be responsible for) the survival of our world. A cohesive family, by definition, raises children who will take on this responsibility.

Once the world has broken into our family, we cannot deny our new unpleasant family member. But we can (and should) turn it on when it is truly worthwhile.

Unfortunately, mass communication and the flood of movies, commercials, and even newspapers do everything they can to devalue real relationships, communities and solidarity. And why do they do that? A lonely, anxious person deprived of their relationships, values, life goals and

self-esteem can be used for specific necessary functions, can be manipulated and substituted any time. The disruption of human relationships and values is a strategy whose effectiveness can be measured in money, power and profit. And, therefore, enormous forces serve it, even if unaware of it. We must recognise these forms of manipulations, and do all we can to protect our shared values and quality of life for the survival of the families, our communities, our quality of life and our shared values that serve the survival of mankind.

WAYS AND LABYRINTHS OF SEEKING HAPPINESS



The followers of positive psychology approach the human being from the perspective of the healthy individual rather than of the patient. The meaning of life is regarded as the source of human happiness, but its content can vary greatly.

Persons are happy in their relationships if they can commit to their partner and create a community of life and, in addition, they can find their social role and vocation. Within the Holy Bible, the Sermon on the Mount mentions eight "beatitudes". Many priests and theologians regard this sermon and these eight very concretely defined ideas as the "keynote speech" of Jesus of Nazareth. When discussing the issue of happiness in relationships, it is worth considering their significance.

Many scholarly and spiritual books have been published on the subject of the eight beatitudes. The section below offers brief reflections on each beatitude that are easy to understand for non-religious people as well, and also refers to the lack of each beatitude and the resulting loss. However, the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount cannot be discussed without speaking about their very essence: what they say about the relationship between God and man.

INDIVIDUAL OWNERSHIP VERSUS A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

In the light of Adler's and Allport's concepts discussed above, it may not be far-fetched to assume that the phrase

"poor in spirit" corresponds to the "sense of community" or, as Allport puts it, the "extension of the sense of self". The poor in spirit do not want to own anything or anyone. Power is a form of possession, which they also want to avoid. The core of the mental attitude of the poor in spirit is that they do not seek to acquire power or wealth for themselves; instead, they wish to partake in a relationship and in human communities, to interact with others.

Their real attitude is revealed when they actually become poor. Poverty or deprivation is an oppressive situation, yet the poor in spirit are capable of preserving their inner freedom even under such circumstances. Alexander the Great once visited the Greek philosopher Diogenes and offered to give him whatever he asked for. Diogenes, who lived in a barrel and had nothing, was sunbathing at the time; he asked Alexander who was standing over him not to block out the sunlight. When it comes to the definition of perfection, we may say that a person is perfect if his or her existence is dependent on as few conditions as possible, and can be happy under any circumstances.

Spanish mystics and mendicant orders chose poverty as a way of life, where their very survival depended on daily alms. Poverty made them experience God's providence. A precondition of a community of life is being poor in spirit, where people do not seek to own their partners but want to help them in their journey towards perfection.

Indeed, the majority of large families are poor. They may experience, on a daily basis, that they cannot meet all needs of their children and if they can, they do not take it for granted but as a manifestation of divine providence.

The basis of the Christian world-view is the conviction that we are living in a transcendent, divine world of infinite personalness, which, in essence, is good. The more we can give up insignificant details, the closer we get to this infinite personalness.

AVOIDING OR ACCEPTING SUFFERING

Blessed are they that mourn:
for they shall be comforted.

Allport claims that a characteristic trait of a mature personality is a unified view of life. The development of such a view is hindered, among others, by our inability to understand the meaning of suffering. Anyone who searches for the significance of suffering in human life is undertaking a very difficult task, because, seemingly, the meaning of suffering is the most difficult and crucial issue in all world religions. Every being strives to avoid suffering – this is a precondition of their survival. A living being that does not feel suffering and does shrink from it will soon die.

It stems from their very nature as living beings that humans also try to keep away from suffering, and on this basis, we may say that a living being is happy if it can do so successfully. Yet in the course of socialisation, punishment is used to deter children from acts which are unacceptable for the society.

As a result of socialisation, individuals try to satisfy their inner urges for pleasure without violating social norms, and by achieving the commonly accepted values. A state of crisis occurs when external circumstances, personal abilities and

learned skills do not allow individuals to act in harmony with their existing schemas, i.e. when they come face to face with a seemingly insurmountable challenge. A crisis situation can be resolved without damage to the integrity of the person only if he, as U.S. psychologists Susan Folkman and Richard Lazarus put it in their Ways of Coping Scale, "Changed or grew as a person in a good way", that is, moved to a higher level of personality development.

Erikson claims that at the beginning of each stage of psychosocial development the person experiences a psychosocial crisis; it is coping that equips the individual with new strengths and abilities. In contrast, failures may result in personality disorders that require specific therapy to heal. Those who avoid crisis situations and, thus, the potential for development, may easily become pathologically selfish, develop personality disorders and turn out to be unfit for intimate and happy relationships and family life.

To sum it up, suffering is an indispensable condition for development. Another possible definition of a developed personality is that such a person is in a loving relationship with almost every phenomena, and can exist and can maintain his integrity in almost any condition. This is why Saint John of the Cross says, "To achieve that which you do not know yet, go to the place where you know nothing. To achieve that which you do not love yet, go to the place where you love nothing."

Suffering and crises trigger development not only in the life of the individual, but of the community and the family as well. The family is an ever changing, evolving or disintegrating

community. It is the spouses' daily task to build the family and manage crisis situations appropriately, and their marital relationship will move to increasingly higher levels by resolving these crises. Therefore, the general principle is that one must suffer in order to grow and develop.

The symbol of Christianity is Christ on the cross. It indicates that suffering has a crucial role in Christian denominations. Saint Teresa of Ávila compared the human soul to a castle. We might imagine that God resides in its most ornate hall, but we look only to find that He is not there. Saint Teresa found God in the dungeon. "Within this divine prison / Of love in which I live, / My God my captive is. / My heart is free / To behold my prisoner-God (...)" Perhaps Teresa found the best way to resolve the contradiction between the existence of God as infinite goodness and the seemingly hopeless suffering He created. The act of creation entails being subjected to the suffering of limited existence, which God undertakes out of love. In other words, God keeps us all in existence out of love, while suffering human limitations. In Saint Teresa's poem the dungeon represents this suffering, which is symbolised by the cross and the crucifixion. Teresa's vision gives an explanation for the meaning of suffering: it shows that suffering of all kinds is a place where we can find God.

As we grow older, we suffer more losses: we lose our social status and then our health, our mental faculties decline. No wonder that many dread old age and wish to stay young forever. Hungarian poet Sándor Weöres, in a poem from his cycle *Rag Carpet*, relates how human beings become a part of divine suffering as they age:

"When I was a young child
I was singing squirming in my cage.
I never wanted to leave;
I was peeping into my future in fright.
I would never
go back,
I would never
go back,
I no longer long for that golden cage.

When I was a long-legged teenager,
I was stumbling around in my adolescent fever.
I knew there was only one youth
and I thought I would long to return all my life.
I would never
go back,
I would never
go back,
to my cold pillow soaked in my tears.

Now, like a twig on a pyre,
I am consumed by God's suffering.
It is not a finite pain like that of a butchered animal.
It is limitless, like the pain of fertile soil.
I would never
go back,
I would never
go back,
my pain is perfect
and pure as heaven."

Most probably, the greatest suffering in family life is to see our loved ones in pain. For Our Lady, the greatest suffering was not her own but what she saw at the foot of the cross. For a family, the most severe suffering is to see their children deprived, ill, disabled or disoriented. Yet many families find that it is this state of suffering that takes them closer to the omnipresent God who cannot be perceived by our senses. According to folk wisdom, God visits the sufferer in the midst of suffering.

SEEKING POWER VERSUS GENTLENESS

Blessed are the meek:
for they shall inherit the earth.

There are many marriages, where one of the parties puts the partner in a completely vulnerable position. Those who commit domestic violence use all the mental and physical means one can think of, that we only imagine possible in prisons of dictatorships.

Cycles of apparent remorse, promises and violence keep recurring and they can culminate even in murder. When the abuser speaks about love during acts of violence, it is a deception, an attempt to weaken the partner's ability of self-defence.

Traditionally, the society refrains from interfering in marital conflicts until there is evidence of grievous bodily harm. In reality, in the case of domestic violence the events that take place in the formal framework of marriage are more akin to slavery than marriage, and fall into the scope of criminology. Such abuses occur very frequently in all

strata of society, and, in most cases, remain hidden. This is one of the possible reasons why many young people who have experienced domestic violence and live in a civil union dread the idea of marriage: they link abuse with marriage or think that marriage would make it more difficult for them to escape.

The opposite of seeking power is meekness or gentleness. A comparison of power-mongering and gentleness may lead to the conclusion that those who seek power abuse the vulnerability of the gentle. Gentleness is the alternative which, for many, is not an example to follow. In this pair of opposites, gentleness appears to be helplessness, spiritual weakness or fanatical self-sacrifice. But that is not gentleness. That is weakness. Weak are those who can assert themselves only through violence, and weak are their victims who do not have adequate means to defend themselves. But only individuals of great inner strength can afford to be gentle.

Gentle people are strong, and, therefore, they do not need power or violence to achieve their goals. The word "gentleman" denotes an individual who is gentle, a person whose most important trait is tactfulness. As a result of the extension of the self, mature persons are able to love intimately, that is, they want their partner to be and to become more and more complete. The principles defined by Rogers for helping professionals are true for gentle persons, too: genuineness or congruence, acceptance or the unconditional positive regard of others, and real understanding i.e. true empathy. Acceptance does not mean

strengthening the inhuman traits in the other person; on the contrary, it empowers the potential of the other person.

As Allport claims, a precondition of the capacity for intimacy and compassion (warm relating of self to others) is that we avoid intrusive or possessive relationships with other people and respect their space to seek their own identity. Tenderness is the recognition and expansion of the partner's positive qualities and potentials, and the extension of his or her opportunities and world. It is clear that in the absence of gentleness, a true community of life cannot evolve, and serious conflicts can occur within a family between parents and children. Without gentleness, parents hand down to the next generation inferiority complexes, arrogance and hunger for power, along with all their consequences for the individual and the society.

SECULARITY VERSUS THE DESIRE FOR TRUTH

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they will be filled.

A community of life is unity without a power structure, which means that neither of the parties control the other. There are many communities which are held together by a force other than power structure. Examples include any genuine non-governmental organisation where, as per their deed of foundation, only the president is obligated to follow instructions. Many research groups, particularly informal research networks (online collaborations of professionals employed in different parts of the world) work under the

same principles. It is common goal and common interest that aligns such communities. A community of life differs from an NGO or a research group inasmuch as it is established with the intention to rise to a plane of existence that transcends the individual plane and is aimed at shared happiness.

In the welfare consumer society of the Unites States, a universally accepted ideal of happiness is a stable job, an adequate income, the ownership of a family home and a car for all. But wealth alone does not make human beings satisfied. In his election speech of 1964, given in Madison Square, U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson pointed out: "Goals cannot be measured by the size of our bank account. They can only be measured in the quality of lives that our people lead." Quality of life research and positive psychology, which have considerably expanded since then, can be regarded as the research of the pursuit of happiness.

Basic concepts of positive psychology include, among others, quality of life, coping skills, competence and creativity. As Martin Seligman stresses, happiness has nothing to do with the rule that one should always be smiling. Seligman distinguishes three levels of happiness:

1. positive emotions, joyful experiences (Pleasant Life),
2. being committed to what we do (Engaged Life),
3. finding the meaning of life (Meaningful Life).

U.S. psychologist Ed Diener claims that the rate of positive emotions on a given day should exceed that of negative emotions, but we need both. If someone is always in a positive emotional state, they either suffer from hypomania or are in the manic stage. When the rate of positive emotions falls under 30% persistently, the individual becomes prone

to depression. For healthy persons, the rate of positive emotions should be around 60–70%. Yet true happiness is something more than mere positive emotions or inspiration. All of this has a value only when we find meaning in life. (See Richard Rahe's questionnaire discussed above.)

Starting from a definition of happiness as based entirely on material well-being, positive psychology arrives at the meaning of life as a source of happiness. But finding the truth is something more than the realisation of the meaning of life. It is not only an achievement of the human intellect, but a personal relationship with the source of existence, love and truth, that is, with God.

At this point, let us relate a well-known story. A Hindu teacher, trying to show his disciple the right path of seeking the truth, pushed him into a river. When the disciple, almost drowning, fought his way to back the surface, the teacher asked him how he felt. Instead of giving a meaningful answer, the disciple could only utter "Air", while gasping for air. In other words, truth can only be found by those who are hungry and thirsty for it, and long for it like a drowning man for air.

COMPETITION VERSUS RECIPROCITY

Blessed are the merciful:
for they shall obtain mercy.

There are various definitions for social capital in the literature, all of which agree that social capital within a given community denotes the mutual commitment of community members to ensure increased security. They

are merciful in the hope that mercy will be shown to them, and that they will benefit from solidarity, reliability and trust. (In the Hungarostudy 2002 data collection, the item on reciprocity was: "If I do someone a favour, I can hope that it will be reciprocated." Distrust was measured with the following item: "In general, people are mean and selfish, and just want to take advantage of others.")

The questionnaire on collective efficiency illustrates vividly that social capital is a feature of a neighbourhood or other communities, rather than of an individual or a family. Social capital is primarily created by families. Families do not live in a vacuum, they cooperate and together they shape their physical and personal environment, and together they develop the social capital of their communities. Accordingly, the questions/statements of the Chicago-based Collective Efficacy Scale was used in the Hungarostudy 2002 survey as follows:

1. If there is a problem will neighbours deal with it?
2. This is a close-knit neighbourhood.
3. No one in neighbourhood cares (reversed).
4. Are there adults to look up to?
5. People around here are willing to help their neighbours.
6. People in this neighbourhood generally don't get along. (reversed)
7. People in this neighbourhood can be trusted.
8. In this neighbourhood parents know local children.
9. In this neighbourhood, most parents know each other.
10. If a group of neighbourhood children were skipping school and hanging out on a street corner, neighbours would do something about it.

The assessment of the Hungarostudy data clearly shows that social capital, which entails reciprocity and collective efficiency, is a factor protecting health for women and the less well-off in Hungary. Competition is a risk primarily for men, and organising associations are more characteristic for them. Men and women, however, are interdependent. Reciprocity, a characteristic of women, is a significant factor protecting men's health while NGO activity, mainly performed by men is a significant factor preserving women's health.

The negative assessment of one's own financial situation also poses a risk for both sexes. The way women evaluate the economic situation of their micro-region significantly correlates not only with the mortality of middle-aged women, but also (and to a higher degree) with that of middle-aged men, and conversely as well: middle-aged men's perception of this issue is related not only to the mortality of middle-aged men but also to mortality among middle-aged women.

All this is confirmed by our studies and the research of contemporary U.S. social epidemiologist Ichiro Kawachi, namely, that mutual help between families has a major impact on the mental and physical health of the whole society. Moreover, the happiness of a family greatly depends on whether they are members of a community which offers them an adequate spiritual environment for a balanced life and, occasionally, financial help, that is, where they can help others and receive help from others.

SELF-INTEREST OR COMMITMENT

Blessed are the pure in heart:
for they shall see God.

Sexuality can take human beings into a transcendent world, but it can also turn them into animals. This depends on the quality of couple's personal relationship. It is not only rape that makes the perpetrator an animal, but also any act, whether within or outside the relationship, in which sexuality becomes an end in itself. Sexuality may provoke disgust in many people, and, although it is allowed in marriage, it may be seen as a bad thing. This is a source of prudery that has destroyed too many intimate relationships. This is why Catholic theology professor Tamás Nyíri, relying on his priestly confessional experience, wrote a book on the demon of shame and the angel of eroticism.

In a community of life, sexuality can make the individual part of a transcendent and divine world, provided that sexuality is the means of the complete (physical and spiritual) union of a man and a woman. In an intimate relationship, individuals can recognise the partner's transcendent dimensions and can intuit the presence of God in the other person, and desire to unite with the divine being they thus have recognised. The Song of Songs of the Bible and the mystics' poems use sexuality as a metaphor to describe the union of the soul and God.

On a human level, sexuality is a play of creative energies released in a community of life. Freedom, along with the free realisation of creative ideas, are crucial elements of play. In a community of life, everything that is done for the sake

of the other is allowed. But this is something the partners can learn only from each other. Sexuality is an intimate affair of the couple, it is not to be shared with anyone. If either of the partners engages in extramarital sex, he or she leaves the community of life. Even talking about their sexual life to someone else is a breach of their community of life. Outsiders will not be able to understand the essence of the couple's relationship anyway.

Formerly, it was standard practice for young people to be initiated in sexuality by an experienced person, so that they can learn the ropes. As discussed above, instead of preparing for marriage, it rather destroys it, since it conveys only the animal-like aspects of sexuality.

But the process which is really complex and must be acquired takes place in the world of symbols. Jung's *anima* and *animus* can take on innumerable forms, from the "hero" or the "wizard" to the "artist", which means that the couple, while mobilizing the symbols, may use all branches of arts: poetry, music, dance, gastronomy and visual arts. Among the *animas*, there is a clear distinction between the figure of the "virgin" and the "experienced woman". There are many young men who have a sexual relationship with several women, but, when it comes to a serious commitment, still seek to marry the mysterious one, the "virgin". So, when a woman tries to draw in a man, to entice him, she should still remain mysterious. In a radio interview, a single man once said that he would not marry a young woman whom he could easily seduce immediately after their first meeting. He would think that she ignores him. Yet why do so many women engage

in sex soon after meeting a man? Because they think that otherwise men will leave them immediately, and they will not have the opportunity to get married. However, it will be difficult to form a community of life for someone whose only goal is marriage, and the other person is only a means to that end. The goal should be the partner and not the marriage.

Therefore, it is important for individuals to be able to imagine other ways of life, to be independent in this sense, so that they could choose marriage for the sake of the partner and not just for the sake of being married. Those who do not marry, on the other hand, still must commit themselves, since they can become part of the world only through commitment. In their case, commitment is a vocation they undertake for the sake of other people: they may choose to be a priest or opt for a monastic or similar way of life. It may seem contradictory, but it is not, that the basis of a community of life is this inner independence that undertakes the possibility of a solitary and committed life.

CONFLICT VERSUS PEACE

Blessed are the peacemakers:
for they shall be called the children of God.

Conflict sociologies, such as Marxism, regard society as a struggle of opposing forces for power, and society is characterised by constant battle. Calm is always temporary and stems from the mutual fear of the groups involved in the conflict. Conflict theories claim that there is incessant

competition and hatred between groups or classes in society, between different ethnic groups, religions and civilisations, and wars are inevitable in such a conflict-ridden world.

A political scientist asked whether politicians give rise to conflicts or conflicts give rise to politicians. It never occurs to a politician that people could live a life free of conflict.

The world where Jesus lived was just like that. The hatred that surrounded him was so strong that his crucifixion was inevitable, yet he said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." What is the source of such peace? Possibly, the belief that whatever happens to us, falls in line with God's will, and it happens for our own good. Those who experience this are filled with infinite tranquillity and peace.

Atheists also have access to a source of this peaceful worldview, as shown by the example of Émile Durkheim, the French proponent of functionalism. The functionalist approach attributes critical significance to the harmony of a community, which, in turn, is based on a sense of social or national identity. The cohesive forces of a community include collective consciousness, value consensus, shared norms, a shared culture and history, heroes, shared symbols and rites. Religion places communities in a transcendent dimension and, at the same time, integrating all these cohesive elements. The functions of a community complement each other. In this approach, the cooperation between members of the society is primarily and usually voluntary, triggered by

an inner impulse. In this process, the authorities of the community have only a secondary role.

In a workplace setting, this approach is built on the motivation of the employees: the management supports their initiatives and ideas, and the employees are dedicated and committed to carrying them out. Within organisations and at the global level as well, dedication and commitment can create networks based on voluntary cooperation. Such leadership and collaboration is a prerequisite especially for effective research at a research centre, but many companies operate under this principle.

The model described by functional sociologies is the source of human happiness, and, at the same time, the goal of human beings. A major source of happiness is an inclusive and supportive community, where people have a vitally important role to play.

A family should be such a loving community, where individuals can commit unconditionally. Families often cooperate to build a living environment, a school or a church. Many feel the vocation to make society and its functions harmonious and more fit for human beings.

Such constructive people choose cooperation over conflict and competition, because, as shown by history, rivalry engenders wars and destruction, while collaboration, being the engine of development, builds the kingdom of God. Such a constructive activity requires the establishment of peace. This is how families that fulfil their function act as the most important institutions of peace and development.

PERSECUTION VERSUS HOME

Blessed are they which are persecuted
for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

In his "political ten commandments", Hungarian political theorist István Bibó presents us with an ideal human being who is not afraid when threatened, and protects human rights and public good (or, one might say, truth) consistently. Happy is he who is capable of such independence and is committed to justice. In the following section, we would like to argue that nowadays the key issues of human rights, the common good and justice are related to the family. It is the family that is persecuted for 'righteousness' sake'; essentially mankind's continuation depends on whether we can protect the institution of family and those residing within – namely children.

Rudolf Andorka attributes five functions to the family: production, consumption, reproduction, socialisation and the psychological protection of family members. In the 20th century, the protective function became critical.

Communities of life, just like human beings, are unique and unrepeatable; therefore, there is no general pattern that would apply to all. The formation of communities of life is always a unique story that depends of a series of coincidences which never occur again in other cases. This may give the impression that genuine communities of life are rare. But the data below show quite the opposite. It seems that every young person who wishes to live in a community of life can rely on the coincidences and miracles of their life. Believers can trust in divine providence.

In Hungarostudy 2002, when answering the question on social support from partners, (possible answers were: no help at all, a little help, average help, much help). 79.4% of the respondents said that they can count on their partner's support very much. As far as the quality of the relationship is concerned, we included three yes-no questions/statements. They are as follows:

1. "Is your spouse/partner the person closest to you that you confide in?"
2. "You solve your problems together with your spouse/partner."
3. "You spend your free time together with your spouse/partner."

86.1% of married people (5,250 people) and 82.8% of cohabiting persons (570 people) chose the "yes" option for all three questions. It can be concluded then that in Hungary social support is very strong in marriages or civil unions, and, based on the responses, it may be assumed that the vast majority of the population managed to establish a community of life.

Historically, the fulfilment of communities of life was often hindered by the fact that men, working as day labourers, soldiers, sailors or travellers, were away from their families for a long time. In the 20th-century, wars and ensuing atrocities large masses were abducted and separated from their families for years. For them, knowing that they had a home somewhere nurtured life force. Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti says in his *Forced March*:

"Oh if only I could believe that everything of worth
Were not just in my heart – that I still had a home on earth;
If only I had!"

Both dictatorships of the 20th century Hungary were afraid that families which fulfil a protective function may weaken their power. They came up with the slogan "Having children is the duty of married women and the glory of unmarried women", however, children were urged to observe their parents' behaviour and report back onany anti-regime activity they notice. Attempts were then made to transfer the family's responsibilities in children's socialisation to crèches, kindergartens, and primary schools.

After the fall of communism, unemployment as a social phenomenon caught the Hungarian society unprepared. In such conditions, those who lost their job and financial resources found a strong safety net in their close relationships, in their immediate and extended family. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that about 90% of those whom were let down by friends, co-workers or neighbours in such circumstances were saved by their families.

Since then, employees have been persistently disenfranchised in the workplace to an almost unprecedented degree. According to German medical sociologist Johannes Siegrist and our surveys, the premature mortality in the middle-aged Hungarian population can be explained partly by job insecurity. Unpredictable conditions are characterised by the uncertain duration

of employment, low influence at work, unsatisfactory level of occupational safety, and low salary. The wording of employment contracts is vague, something that the employer could very easily take advantage of. When employment contracts should be based on a pay-for-performance model; they instead undermine reciprocity, a basic norm of work ethics. This triggers intense negativity, chronic anxiety and chronic stress in employees. Therefore, workplaces that capitalise on the employees' vulnerability and on coercion cause large-scale damage to society.

All too often, employers, threatening employees with redundancy, deprive them of their personal freedom; some even controlling their free time. This is particularly true for foreign, illegal workers, young employees and women. The phenomenon is very common in chain stores, at high-salary financial institutions and foreign companies, practically the entire business sector. This disenfranchisement is a direct attack on family as an institution. Women who are recently married, have small children or would like to have children, may find it difficult to get a job. Workplaces put so much pressure on both men and women that they become almost unable to maintain a lasting relationship, to have a family life or to pay attention to their children.

Power-mongering causes employees to be overworked, depriving the overworked of family life, the only institution that would provide mental health protection for them as adults. Consequently, this creates masses of lonely people who are out of control, apathetic, depression-prone, narrow-minded, anxious and extremely exhausted. Clearly, the destruction of families causes a severe demographic

and health care problem, leads to the elimination of the social safety net, and poses a threat to the very existence of society. Therefore, those who make efforts to protect the institution of the family and seek justice for it are the ones who do the greatest service to mankind.

AFTERWORD

Continue seeking for happiness

My parents, the authors of this book – Mária Kopp and Árpád Skrabski - researched the Hungarian state of mind in follow-up studies with thousands of participants. They were looking for answers to a number of interesting questions, such as how the meaning of life, family and happy marriage are related to health. Their scientific work and original approaches have been valued all over the world. It was their finding that for men, dealing with children is the most serious health protection factor and that it is fatal for men when women are dissatisfied with the family's financial situation.

These studies also show that young people in Hungary would like to have a lot more children than they actually have. Young people wish to have 2 to 3 babies, but then not more than 1 to 2 are being born.

My parents considered it so important that the children wished for are being born that to this end, they founded the Three Princes, Three Princesses Movement in 2009. First my father and then, in 2012, my mother passed away, so I inherited the continuation of the movement.

The issue of children being wished for is a very original idea, only Hungary has a foundation focusing to this issue. It is unique in the sense that we do not say that everyone should give birth, but that everyone should have as many children as they wish for. That is, those, who do not want to have children, should not have any, whereas those, who wish to have ten children, should be given the opportunity to have all ten. The fact that the number of desired and

born children has increased in recent years, in addition to the active family policy, is certainly the result of the movement started by my parents.

The Three Princes, Three Princesses is a foundation for awareness raising and community building. The name is a reference to Hungarian folk tales where the third child brings good luck: if these third children would be born across the country, we all could benefit from it.

We have created small local communities, and encourage workplaces to be family-friendly.

The most difficult task is raising awareness, as changing a trend takes long time. However, this book also argues that it is worth living in a family, because it leads to a happy, successful and healthy life. You may ask, how do we find our spouse? How to overcome bad parenting patterns? How can we maintain family peace? All of these questions are answered in the writings of my parents, who have had a wonderful relationship, a peaceful home not only in theory, but also in practice. They achieved this mainly by praising each other and us a lot! I miss them, but with their thoughts they are present also in the latest edition of the book.

Fruzsina Skrabski
one of the authors' daughters,
chair or the Three Princes,
Three Princesses Movement
www.haromkiralyfi.hu

Common treasures

Our family research institute, the Mária Kopp Institute for Demography and Families, abbreviated as KINCS (TREASURE), started its operations in 2018, the Year of Families. It is a great honour for us to bear the name of Mária Kopp, and at the same time it is a great responsibility that requires commitment, authenticity and professionalism. Following the spirit of Mária Kopp and her husband and partner in work Árpád Skrabski, our common goal is to contribute to the birth of the children wished for in Hungary, to find the most appropriate and effective answers to our population problems, and to ensure that the families that keep the country expand and become even stronger.

Without the physical and mental well-being of families, the protection and promotion of families and the mapping of the possible pathways to the demographical change, it is inconceivable to build our common future and make a halt to the population decline. For this purpose, our institute carries out domestic and international research and policy analyzes that can serve as a basis for measures on family and population affairs, thus contributing to the family friendly, harmonious functioning of society and the survival of our nation.

In addition to the scientific work of Mária Kopp and Árpád Skrabski, it is decisive that Mária Kopp created the Population Roundtable in 2009, which has, via its proposals, contributed to and provided the basis for the family-oriented governance launched in 2010. They have

already at that time proposed the introduction of measures that then became part of our daily lives, such as family taxation, flexible childcare allowances or home creation. The motto of Mária Kopp is guiding us all to this day: let all children wished for be born.

I am grateful for the opportunity to get to know and work with Mária Kopp, who stood up for our common cause, the cause of families and population with incredible energy, dedication and enthusiasm. In our institute, KINCS, we consider it a mandatory but very pleasant task to nurture and carry forward the intellectual heritage of Mária Kopp and Árpád Skrabski, and not only because noblesse oblige.

One of our related tasks was to re-publish their joint book entitled "Ways of Seeking Happiness" in 2020 in cooperation with their daughters. The gap-filling book guides us through the ways on the search for happiness with scientific thoroughness, but at the same time with a readable and practical approach. The book formulates a message to everyone: singles and couples, married people, people with or without children, the elderly and the young. We know that many of you have been waiting for the new edition, which is a literary standard for many of us. With its capacity to identify key points, its scientific awareness-raising, and at the same time uplifting sentences - which invite the reader to read again and again – the volume speaks to everyone and touches everyone.

Mária Kopp and her husband, Árpád Skrabski, have not been with us for a decade, but we keep them in our minds, souls and hearts, along with their thoughts and

their guidelines, which can be found along the pages of this book as real treasures.

Tünde Fűrész
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The authors - also being a married couple - conducted a series of social psychological and behavioral sociological studies, among which the Hungarostudy research stands out.

Mária Kopp and her husband, Árpád Skrabski, wrote not only this book, but their whole lives together. Anyone who knows them closely knows that they have succeeded in what so many people dream of: looking at and exploring the world together, with almost the same, but definitely with very close interests, scientific and human curiosity. And in the meantime, they were looking for what so many of us were doing as well: how can we be happy?

Mária Kopp, both as a doctor and a psychologist, testified that body and soul can only be examined together in their entirety. The source of health is the proper functioning of both components, and in Hungary - in any case - one of the most important foundations for this is the family. In a culture where the family is still a condition for a happy life for most people today, the large number of planned but not yet born children symbolises an unfulfilled desire in the "soul" of society. Although she has often talked about the difficult demographic situation, we know that her first priority was to make people happy, to help them on their way to true health. She believed that happiness is not a state but an active progress on the path to our goals.

This book will help you do that. After reading it, we will know better what we need to do, what we can do to have a family and relationship that we have always wanted.

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