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## **Interactive sources of intimacy: psychological, social, environmental**

In this paper we will examine how the interactive experience and healthy conditions of „self” to „self” contact, intimacy with others – also called closeness – can serve to further strengthen our knowledge of growing in togetherness in our relationship with others and in our caring for the world, our environment. By environment, we mean, as most important, social space and lived time. Intimacy is understood as the ability for psychological, personal involvement in the context of relationship with many fellow humans, as well as with social, and other environmental realms. This is clearly a movement from within the self, or, intentional, and, also, a specialized way of facilitating discourse or dialogue. In other words, it is an open and deeply personal sharing of the self, by being true to the self, and by acknowledging our sensibility and mutual vulnerability. Kenneth Schmitz (1986, p. 47) explains that self-disclosure, mutuality, as interactive sources of intimacy, are rooted in knowing one another through the unique way of a lived presence. Gabriel Marcel (1960) makes us aware that the interactive dynamic sense of intimacy goes beyond intimacy of the moment toward quality, which he calls „the hidden depth” of our reliable sense of co-presence.

We will examine in some detail (1) a tendency in our culture of activities, toward being independent, and, also, what is surprisingly significant, for human beings, emerging ways of knowing the self and others in an intersubjective, intimate connection, and (2) descriptive existential elements of interactive intimacy as related to different demands of situations in our social communal opening toward solidarity, that is, experiencing bonds of relationships as opportunity for growth in sensitivity and for broadening the horizon of development.

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## 1. Tendency toward being independent vs. knowing the self and others intimately

The subjects of the pilot study<sup>1</sup>, college students, were asked to choose from the given set of values their orientation in life, and, also, to describe the experience of being in an interaction relationship. Initially, the students' responses indicated independence, and what it does for them, is more important than being interdependent. As individualists, they have a feeling that they are perhaps less than, rugged individualists but that they should be so, although at times they may experience great difficulty being themselves and letting other people be themselves. While this response accentuates the importance of independence as an orienting force, eminently dominant in our American, and, also Western culture, however, when they were asked to choose from another set of orienting values, that is, for instance, „being self-actualized versus transcending the self toward other(s)“ a large number of respondents, students, chose the outward movement toward others, that is, to favor self-transcendence, moving toward the world. This indicated that they got an insight into differentiating ways of presence in the world and, also, the value of interaction relation and „cooperation with others.“ It, interaction relation, suddenly, became more important in enhancing growth than „being autonomous.“ Then, with this expanded awareness, or larger frame of reference, they put less emphasis on „acting in self-interest.“ „Making friends“ was valued higher than „being a friend to oneself.“ And „entering into dialogue with others“ took precedence over „making sense of things for oneself.“ We observe a tremendous change in context here. And yet, the paradox, the duality that gets expressed is the very fact that one consciously makes the connection between independence and interdependence in the broader context; it shows that there is some hidden resonance, similarity there. More orienting values

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<sup>1</sup> Orientation in life

The subjects of this pilot study, students of the academic year 1999/2000 and 2001/2002, psychodynamic class, Department of Psychology, Sacred Heart University were asked to choose from the series of opposite orienting values the dominant one from each pair presented beneath:

Being independent	vs. Being interdependent
Being self-actualized	vs. Transcending the self toward others
Being autonomous	vs. Cooperating with others
Acting in self-interest	vs. Interacting with others
Being a friend to yourself	vs. Making friends
Making sense of things for yourself	vs. Being in dialogue with others

After completing this task, subjects / students were asked to describe experience of being close to someone.

are lived then are explicitly and formally emphasized; it makes a very difference in the way in which values are lived and the way in which an understanding of reality is opened up.

According to Edmund Husserl's (1983) dictum „back to the things themselves” and to the world, the issue of being interdependent needs to be addressed afresh if we are ever to understand our growing or transforming quality of experience and action, also (a) a *desideratum* to acknowledge the need for being interdependent that requires taking a stand and, (b) describing being with and for one another as self-disclosure of the world, now, grounded in the world of interacting. The world of interacting understood most especially as world of shared meanings, and sharing, here, means a genuinely shared existence, shared values.

Hannah Arendt (1959, 158-159) contends that self-disclosure of the personal world „can never be achieved as a willful purpose..., more likely that ‘who,’ which appears so clearly and unmistakably to others, remains hidden from the person himself...”, It appears to be an important movement of the self to come to the clarity of being *interdependent* as it is grounded in the world where the subject experiences this coming closer or responding to the other. As, rightly so, my respondents described being close as experience of „sharing things with others,” as „disclosing something personal about the self-world.” And, quite interestingly, those who were empathetically present, and participants of intimate interaction, observers had simple access to the phenomenon; they could directly feel, and appreciate the sharing of the self; they were prone to say what they experienced in interaction. It is basically the experience of being welcomed and of creating a comfortable environment where can be met the needs of all for knowledge, and fellow feelings can emerge from the interactive possibilities.

One obvious manifestation of an interactive form and style of human intimateness in a direct face-to-face experience, is the smile, an unplanned, although essential natural connection between people. In general, we do not attach much importance to smile. However, smile especially with one's own eyes, has unprecedented meaning, marked by a fresh and unusual approach. For example, one of the characters in a Saint-Exupery' (1900-1944) unpublished story, *Smile (Le sourire)*, says when we „get very close, one to another, it is very hard not to smile...” An opening contact of a smile leaping through the bars is a stimulating experience, a non-verbal [intuitive] expression of interaction relation, felt presence, inner identification, of trusting each other, in a relationship. Some people say that having an opportunity to express this total inner identification, trust, in gestures and phrases unexpectedly, is like being in love with other people.

A smile is an opening of contact, it signals attention, even focus;  
a smile is a start to becoming a quest for otherness;  
a smile is intuition about the initiation of an interaction relation;  
a smile is a feel of presence;  
a smile is the feel of you being alive in me; and  
a smile is appreciation of things going on within my world.

Interestingly, smile opens pathic possibilities in experience, it brings to the foreground of our awareness of genuine caring, to meet the other in her or his openness; it makes anew as a self-transcending experience, a quest for otherness. By having others in our focus, we open and establish a new interaction relationship, and, by being totally involved, we become free to feel a presence of the other or „the you,” as [being] alive in „me” (Slaatte, 1983, p.163).

During, although it is not easy to observe closely, the creation of an interactive relationship, there is a sharpening, through subtle moves, that allow the self to reveal itself further, through insight and perception; there is a flow, in both directions; in the sharing of a personal story, we become part of it and, consequently, of each other, through a greater capacity for actual, and genuine, understanding. And, whether the other is my friend, a fellow student, or a client, this is the opening toward more in the knowing of the other, and results in some sort of dynamic transformation, of outlook that moves and grows and flows within the person and her or his world.

When we get together we harmonize ideas, action, feelings [in intensive and searching forms of conversation]. Interestingly, there is an emerging of something different and more potent in our lives than merely being capable of change through learning or success communication. We feel a certain liberation from within, an aura of freedom or originality that „appertains to the world of shared knowledge and benefits accrued from new knowledge” (Slaatte, 1983, p. 166). The idea is of the unique origin of each. But, for the embodied creatures we are, common sense ways are of the essence and there is no freedom or originality without them. As we know when we encounter a person, as someone, there is simply a space created with sensitivity to intimating and sharing.

At times I am aware of uniquely personal theme, of harmony, or „music” within my own flowing life with more opportunity for responding to others and to the world. Also the opportunity is created from active memory of moments when the *I am*, in experience, is extending and inseparable from my particular world, within the universe. It occurs through and after intensive dedication, or, as things come into blossom within me, as I am on my right path to find destiny. In De Mello’s story, one of characters says to another, why do you speak

of significance of other(s) or, for the same reason, of God at all. –The other, called by De Mello the master, probing this question further, replies in a moment „why does the bird sing? She sings not because she has a statement but because she has a song.” This desire to see things or to do things differently can put up quite „a song of the universe,” which gives rise to significance for the others.

Having deeper connectedness with others, in different situations of our life, calls forth, or brings about, a profound shift in the range of sensibilities that seems to grow directly from our relationship, that interrelates the powers of sense and being sensible, of being reached and reaching, being touched and touching, or in Kierkegaardian terms: „in transcending I am transcended” in bringing more of the self to others I understand relationship. These sensibilities are indicators of growing and going beyond the self, that is, accessing, envisioning or living more fully the rich tapestry of shaped co-existence.

There is always challenge in moving toward nearness or connectedness which enhances the dignity of one’s own self and of the other self, allowing for the creation of the world of intimacy where there is a constant dialogue and choreography of expression because there is more in conscious than we express. It is the unexpressed insight struggling to be expressed, it is the unexpressed language involved of the self’s awareness of her/his being the one engaged in expressing her/himself (Slaatte, 1983). To be expressive consciousness is embodied through connection with the range of expression, in fact, it implies expression, empirically incarnate (Merleau-Ponty, 1976)

My awe for words, action flowing from life, speaking in new ways, stem from this experience of the developmental cycle of gaining understanding in the process of being intimately connected. It is the articulated insight that relates a present with past meanings toward future possibilities. „Even infants are conscious of ideas and actions prior to linguistic support ... A teleology is built into the process of expressing” (Slaatte, 1983). A vague insight becomes a clearly articulated insight through the afford to express it. There is an interest in and there is an insight into certain depths of personal actuality in lived space and time for an experienced and known, lived mode of knowing that renders possible integration of inward and outward conditions of conduct. It is not the outer phenomena or the inner phenomena, but rather the outer with the inner existentially interrelated: the structure is dynamic because we move from inward to outward, from the center of the self in union with the structural whole.

Many aspects of the interactive experience are the rich resources of fundamental values, such as those that are constitutive of trust, kindness, generosity, the importance of sharing with genuine care, understanding

and compatibility. They are all aspects of interactive experience of intimacy. We are talking, here, about priority given to manifest values, one is never just kind, one is kind-to. It is worth noting, how we are always talking, at this level, of the empirics of life: kindness-to, patience-with, that is, experience must be dealt with as experienced; all knowledge of, and the values themselves, are based on such experiences, both a perception, and the study of a perception, answer to the same thing. They are aspects of one's being intimate. These empiric values are concretions of „allowing to be,“ connected intersubjectively as mutual participation and love is tributary to finding one's ontology, as they belong to one's conscious selfhood (Marcel, 1960, p.110).

To trust someone, how can we really manifest trust? We really have to recapture trust in a *post factum* way always. So these values are always manifested at the level of empirics, they are articulations, manifestations of really believing in each other, of really trusting each other, of caring for each other not only in the primacy of consciousness, but in the dependence of consciousness itself on empirical elements. These are moments of being inter-actively present, which is manifestly openness; what should be clear here is that values that govern our interaction relationship have chosen us. Other people around us are always reminding us that there are other values. There is a certain priority here of initiative. Calling character of values which is from the world side, through people who are different than we are, remind us in other words of that which we naturally would forget. The people we get along with well have certain real values.

To appreciate this is to further appreciate the new psychology of the conscious, of today, with a refreshing view for even more distinctive way of thinking, feeling, acting. We do not choose our values, our values choose us. And our values always choose us, though, in a very empiric situation, but they never choose us, though, in a kind of disembodied life. The question of values always comes up in a precise, concrete situation.

All are part of the ongoing dynamics in (1) bringing us together, in (2) the transcendent horizon of values and its continuing movement in the history of our life, to the extent that I am open to it, and (3) by transformation, suddenly making a whole of what is disparate. There was a personalized response here, as evidenced when we hear the other saying: „You were helpful in my organizing my thoughts, my acts,“ „You were kind,“ „You were such an incredible listener,“ „You were tactful,“ „Words became touching,“ that is already full of the genuine care which reveals the importance of sharing. So by being gracious with thoughts, by taking the risk to abandon the old and embrace the new, courteous consideration, the impact supplied, and, in retrospect, the memorable

event and phrases that carry existential meaning have unified the response. It is worth noting that values are always embodied in a particular cultural style: it is already a fundamental principle. All these are widening of the view of the other as dwelling in larger, richer horizons from which she or he her/himself emerges: values are realizations of how one comes to see people, things and events, organizes an image of something, or is on the road to meaning. The special spaces, creative endeavors, within which spiritual awareness is at work, are able expressions of being continually at ease, and, in communicating experiential knowledge, of being truly the companion on the road.

When sensitivity lies beneath all the layers of our wishes, such as constructs to protect ourselves, our dignity, our titles, our degrees, our status and our need to be seen in certain ways, underneath all that, the authentic, essential self emerges, finds expression in gesture, touch, intonation of the voice, in a word, being honored, noticed. We are being reminded about personal witnessing, before all, that much in life is graceful generosity, and that it can foster in us the growth of a certain kind of graceful wholeness. And, when that is our life-world, from which our creative impulses arise, it inspires us to participate in a deeper understanding: empirical everyday consciousness, to make whole in the face, even, of contradiction. We do not hesitate to call it the self in action, continually moving outward, seeking to transcend, to break through to a new future or to a new and deeper questioning, of ourselves and the world; it becomes a source of refreshment, it designates a certain depth between us, an opportunity to venture deeper into the layers of our soul, our self, getting everything together, in a new rhythm, and of revealing mutually some things about ourselves.

Certainly, we will ask ourselves how much we should reveal, and to whom, as an opportunity to broaden our horizons or deepen our knowledge, and whether or not our answers are influenced by our capability to trust and to be trusted. The nature of intimacy is such that it is a creative exchange which needs time to find the feelings to be shared and the words to be spoken, in order to express what is felt inside or how one is personally touched. In a certain sense, we need also to know and feel, and „hear“ our own feelings, because unspoken intimacy is arid and fettered and becomes the source of all kinds of aches, frustrations, inaccuracies, or, what is worse, of inner alienation, resulting in confusion, that is, in not coming truly to know our expectations or the delicate intensity of our feelings. So far as it succeeds, even to a degree, which is never final, it is properly called the encountering of „something“ which existed in us as a potential and that, now, we are able to „go along with.“

## 2. The existential structural elements of intimacy

It is helpful to describe an interactive dynamic sense of intimacy as momentous in bringing about transformation, (what-is-other), not because it always happens in that way, but, because there will occur recognizable moments to help us understand the structural elements of the emerging phenomenon of intimacy. So, I will examine my journey of exploring some distinctive possibilities in this manner.

Initially, in the discovery of the existentially experienced otherness, there is a joyful moment of „things happening within us,” in our innermost selves, our inward beings, and, also, among us that lead to something more potent in life, and, also, to being imaginative, because curiosity is aroused by challenging experiences, and the excitement of venture: what we call the power of self-transcendence, or a going beyond the habitual sense of self, overflows. Those signals of openness-to-what-is-out-there, and other, are manifested in ideas that flow and in insightful activity giving rise to feelings of wonder and amazement. In this inauguration of wonder, and of experience of insight, openness means toying with possibilities: laughter buoys the spirit and energy is effectively well spent on the task at hand.

Moreover, I find one other thing. There is a special way of knowing another through sharing; but it is not by being seduced by aspects of a bodily vibration or by drawing the other into a web of our own needs, but, more fundamentally, through the mutual interest in whom the other actually is. Here our intimate experience of relationships, or how connectedness with each other is lived and, for the same reason, with God, often end abruptly, or break down, or stagnates, because we cannot accept the fact that there is a need to really work on richer kinds of connectedness in order to attain the reality of truly knowing, that is, understanding a living, acting, changing, growing, other person. In generating a larger vision, listening is required in order to hear another, because, once I have heard, [and also have given away part of myself], I am always mindful of the feelings behind the words, and that, now, I have feelings that relate to another.

There is another point. In our practice of a loving concern, or, to put it another way, in being energetically involved with persons in their specific circumstances, such as a crisis, which is a particular kind of unfolding time that requires giving, speaking out when necessary, doing what is needed, helping, showing affection and compassion, being available, and participating in healing with skill and love. Being with others in a crisis situation always contains the quality of an intimate relationship, of connectedness. In one of Sally J. Rafael's television programs, it was reported that a man was wrongfully accused and jailed



for killing a young woman. After a number of years of struggling with the facts of his innocence of his dignity being taken away and of living in a prison environment, finally, and quite accidentally, another man emerged as the killer. The man himself admitted that he was the killer. The guilt that he lived with motivated him to rise to the occasion and to confess to the crime he had committed, killing a young woman. In a further development, the mother of the dead woman visited the fellow who was wrongfully in jail, and vowed, in a face-to-face conversation, to try to speed up his release. After his release, and at the time of the television show, the mother was holding his hand throughout the whole program. She revealed something unexpected and extraordinarily moving about a new feeling: „My relationship with this man is now as a mother to her son.“ And this was reciprocated, as was shown by the joy radiating from the man sitting close to her. A motherly love was extended to another, and, also, brotherly and sisterly love, because now he is one of her sons and daughters. A time of crisis, for many, is facing a turning point, so that discovering a hidden possibility or embracing an ambiguity requires a facilitating skill best available through the fullness of the presence of another.

I find, still, something further to note. Moving on, or through, requires growing and flowing toward integrating new experiences; it allows one to look at life in its wholeness and to understand it in its fullness. The author of *Apologia pro vita sua*, John Newman (2002), remarks that to live is to change and, that to perfect our ways of acting in the world is to have changed often. It is, basically, an intuitively creative response to change through the ability to choose something other than the self and to return to the self, as seen in retrospect as other, eminently new, different.

And yet another point. The capacity for surprise and novelty that is built into our storytelling and our story listening implies that we are called to live truly meaningful lives in the universe that is comprehensible. John Navone and Thomas Cooper (1981, p. 93) say: „Our ability to comprehend our experience is the spontaneous ordering of our experience in storytelling reveals our fundamental self-others-world-mystery relationship.“ Closeness is an important time, for transformative experience, for making peace with oneself, with others, and, ultimately, with God; there is also a felt lightness of being and an emerging new quality of life, which is a joyous identification with life. This happens when one is tactfully, energetically involved, genuinely cares for others, and for the world entrusted to us, or in the giving of oneself for the sake of caring, and demonstrates that our achievements are never simply cause-effect outcomes to get primarily respect or recognition.

There is yet another thing that seem to be in each of us, a desire for intimacy and closeness with the absolute, supreme being acknowledged and recognizable as eminently Other, the source of love, our God, so that none of our deep yearnings could ever be dismissed. I came to embrace fully Augustine's words: „you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless...” I am able to experience the sustaining joy of growth in intimacy with the Trinity of God, not by my choice alone, but because he initiated this relationship through Jesus. I am responding to a sublime, awe-inspiring invitation: „it was I who chose you” (John 15:16). A new venture into the depth of intimate relationship gives rise to an awareness of a partnership with others in the presence of the Spirit in so many works in which we are engaging ourselves. Then, being companions, we are spoken of as „friends.” The criterion for being a friend is an in-depth sharing; the intimate revealing of not just thoughts, ideas and words, but of one's very self. In our human relationships, mutual revelation and self-giving are building blocks of intimacy.

### **3. Opening toward solidarity: experiencing bonds of relationships as opportunity for growth in sensitivity and for broadening the horizon of life and development**

Existential psychologist Rollo May (1967) in a conversation with Margaret Hall (*Psychology Today*) brings an important insight of how experiencing bonds of relationships, existential bonds, that comes into being, here and now, creates an opportunity for growth in sensitivity. In his personal life, it started in a therapeutic situation, and, then suddenly was extended to others and was felt as a deep relation and connectedness. Through his extensive work of writing May found his own vision of right place, self-transcendence and self-giving, rich ways of life, in short, ways of changing the self. It gave him sensitivity to other people and to himself, a discovery of potentialities, he „did not know he had.” His self-in-relation to others „became much wider, deeper, and more interesting, and certainly a more joyful person. And joyful here means not that I make more money or that I can fight harder. It means that when I do something like writing, it is not done just to prove that I am great. It's done as an inner experience of enjoyment coming from a new understanding of myself [and others], an enrichment of myself and of the world. And I get joy [of being fully alive] in the beautiful use of words.”

How had Rollo May felt before he went through this experience? He says, „I used to think when I made a speech that the people in the audience were all my enemies, and I had to fight to get across?”

Evidently, there was a narrowing of vision and, perhaps, a profound pattern of disconnectedness. Now, after this experience, a new identity and connectedness with others emerged through the experience of breakthrough, that is, he perceived himself and others differently: „people come to hear me because they want to.“ How does this new self manifest itself? It manifests sensitivity and, as he admits, the fact that he has grown into a deeper understanding that our being is a summons to a horizon beyond our own empirical sense of the world around us. And in this sense, to live with a believing attitude is crucial. It is, also, clear that he cares for people and he does it willingly, reciprocating love received: he loves to reciprocate the love he receives. It is certainly inner transformational growth, a deeply felt sense of essential connectedness, self-others-world-relation, being able to know and to express love cogently, in a variety of possible ways and experiences. This is something we can enter into, to a deeper enjoyment of life, and, as we are touched again, with a new unique intimacy, our own sense of life is quickened, our awareness of spirit is awakened. Intimacy refers to the resources I have for becoming creatively close to other people that enable me to be the way things really are in the world and in other persons. Not necessarily to be more successful but to be fulfilled in the unique joy coming out of a living performance (in the world), of the self, the noetics of the spirit already permeated with meaning. The person has a regard for both the fostering and the preserving of what makes the world specifically human. And within this, when we savor the sense of life, the priority is on simply „we are growing together,“ in a most profound respect for each other and the life around us, in an appreciation of and respect for the whole rest of nature, all from this continuing close relationship.

Now what happens in a group or community when a frame of reference shifts considerably from one another so that possibly many people simultaneously experience a deeply felt connectedness and involvement in life? Czech's president, Vaclav Havel (1988), a playwright, an actor, and an imprisoned dissident during the communist era, describes existentially experienced intimate events of social contacts between actors in the theater, that gave rise to the movement of Solidarity.

The initial manifestation of genuine social awareness of interconnectedness in living space and time occurs, as Havel points out, the moment those participating in the theater cease to be a „mere group of people and become a community.“ The question can then be raised about the defining moment that transforms a group into a community. It occurs when the mutually felt presence, and, more so, the doing of things together, or interacting, become joint participation. In this particular kind

of existential event their encounter in a single space and [lived] time, or, more exactly still, the emerging rhythm of engagement becomes a communal encounter with authentic growth. Their common existence in the life-world is suddenly enveloped by a very specific, unrepeatable, and imaginatively galvanizing atmosphere. And the key, essential element in the shared experience, mutually understood, evokes the wonderful elation that makes all the self-giving worth while. In fact, it is at this essential moment of sharing that the sources of intimacy are engaged. A common participation in a particular adventure of mind and heart, the exercise of imagination, the sense of humor at play, and a common experience of truth or a flash of insight into the life of truth suddenly makes possible and acceptable the newly established relationship between participants. Havel (1988, p. 250) observes that an unenthused coexistence suddenly blossoms into a mutual understanding, a solidarity or new brotherhood, even into brotherly love, „despite the fact that many participants may not have known or seen each other before.” It is worth noting that, a well-developed ability for healthy intimacy enables the individual to be with different persons in a rich variety of ways that are appropriate to one’s own personality, style and manner of interacting.

Havel again reiterates that an important distinction must be made between existential contact and superficial contact, mere automatic or physical contact which can frequently result in a deeper alienation and estrangement. Then he makes the observation that in a genuinely lived way of community, as we know it, members are drawn into an „event of the spirit,” revelatory of communal participation in the „order of spirit,” shared talents, a communal vision, with others, of hope that is not of things. Now, how does this come about? The mutual response to this embodiment of social communal „spiritedness” evokes, in the space of gathering of the many, the shared experience that makes a convincing sense of belonging; members of the community see their own life in the space and the lived horizon of the story of others and recognize the commonality of this experience. This influence is the primary basis of identification with the many that concerns many and produces the unfolding in its specific and unique historical character. There seems already to be, somehow, another paradigm in place that touches deeper ground in so many. What is evident is that the event though, seemingly, for particular individuals has gone beyond the limits of individual history and now has already moved into a space with many others, the communal space. It does so only because their „environment” has been changed and now all participate in communal specialness and a welcoming of meaningful relationships more inclusive than those of the biological family. Such historically meaningful events concern transformations in many individuals into a so-called epiphany of the spirit, now communal participation with others genuinely makes a difference.

The need for us to experience a sense of community only occurs when the shared meaning makes sense for many. It is an unintelligible situation if there are no communal aspects of our experience included, or there is not frequently shared meaning, or there is no telling of the story. We have to have a common sense or common ways in order to communicate feelings the issues they can evoke – since the words communication and common or communion stem from the same linguistic root – therefore, from within, common ways of community are illuminated and made fully meaningful, self-particularizing ways of existence. That translates, or better mediates, into our knowing how are we free and how open to a special kind of community, where the common is rooted in the deepest ground of our lives. When we get to a certain point, that of passing entirely out of the self and giving to other people in the purity of selfless love, the spirit moves in awesome ways, we share the true center of experience, and in the fullest sense our essential connectedness, its specialness and its „celebratory” nature.

What we are pointing to, here, is that life is possible in a fulfilling, orderly intelligible way and that we cannot speak about human life with others except through this gateway: sharing a common sense, a common sensibility and, not mere curiosity that tends to exclude the self’s participation in the formulation and care for others as ones who are attractive and desirable.

In exploring the issue of common ways, it becomes evident that they, the common ways, should become the repertoire of the wakeful life, the being-in-the-world, as the authentic presence of the self, the self sharing. The freedom of spirit is enhanced, and this makes for free responsible choices and decisions: „an irreplaceable component of the life of community, this small organism, bound by thousands of threads to the great organism of society,” says Havel. Gabriel Marcel (1960, II, p. 19) speaks of this as already grounded in „intersubjectivity,” and he is referring to it as the presence of an underlying reality that is felt, of a community which is deeply rooted in ontology; without which human relations, in any real sense, would be unintelligible.

To conclude, we come to understand intimately others through the tangential, but basic movement of the self or the spirit, „whose being is only a return to itself from what is other” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 15). In speaking inspired words or a narrative, in using nonverbal expressions of gentle touch, in extending peace and joy, as experienced, with renewed energy, the spirit, is put in a position to generate options for change, and, somehow, when we do this lovingly and faithfully, we find ourselves already, and always ready, to be in an intimate relationship.

Indeed, an intimating form of interaction is a joint participation in an unusual journey that fosters mutual understanding, creates a sense of

community, and helps retain and strengthen forms of solidarity, all indispensable for broadly based public communication. Setting human subjectivity apart from all, other people, communal events, devalues our relationships, and, also, nature around us to the status of object for our use. What is needed, besides cognitive capacities, is intuitive and meditative awareness toward being more open to reflective, contemplative understanding of life and nature around us.

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## Interaktywne źródła intymności: psychologiczne, społeczne, środowiskowe

### STRESZCZENIE

W najnowszych badaniach naukowych w kulturze Zachodu na temat zachowań człowieka rozpatrywane są dwie główne tendencje: pierwsza do bycia niezależnym od innych i druga traktującą o sposobach poznania siebie i innych poprzez interaktywne zbliżenie. Interaktywne zbliżenie to ujawnianie nie tylko myśli, idei i słów, lecz również głębokiej, często ukrytej sfery własnego „ja”. Ważną kwestią stało się także równoczesne zbadanie reakcji grupy, społeczności, w chwili, gdy ramy odniesienia przekształcają się znacząco z relacji ja-ty, na jednoczesne odczuwanie podobnych emocji i zaangażowania przez wielu ludzi.

Niezwykle istotne w interaktywnym badaniu źródeł intymności jest nie oddzielanie ludzkiej subiektywności od innych ludzi, wydarzeń społecznych, gdyż takie działania dewaluują nasze relacje, a także naturę wokół nas do statusu przedmiotu. Poza poznaniem kognitywnym, istnieje intuicyjna i medytacyjna świadomość skierowana ku bardziej refleksyjnemu i kontemplacyjnemu sposobowi zrozumienia życia i natury wokół nas.