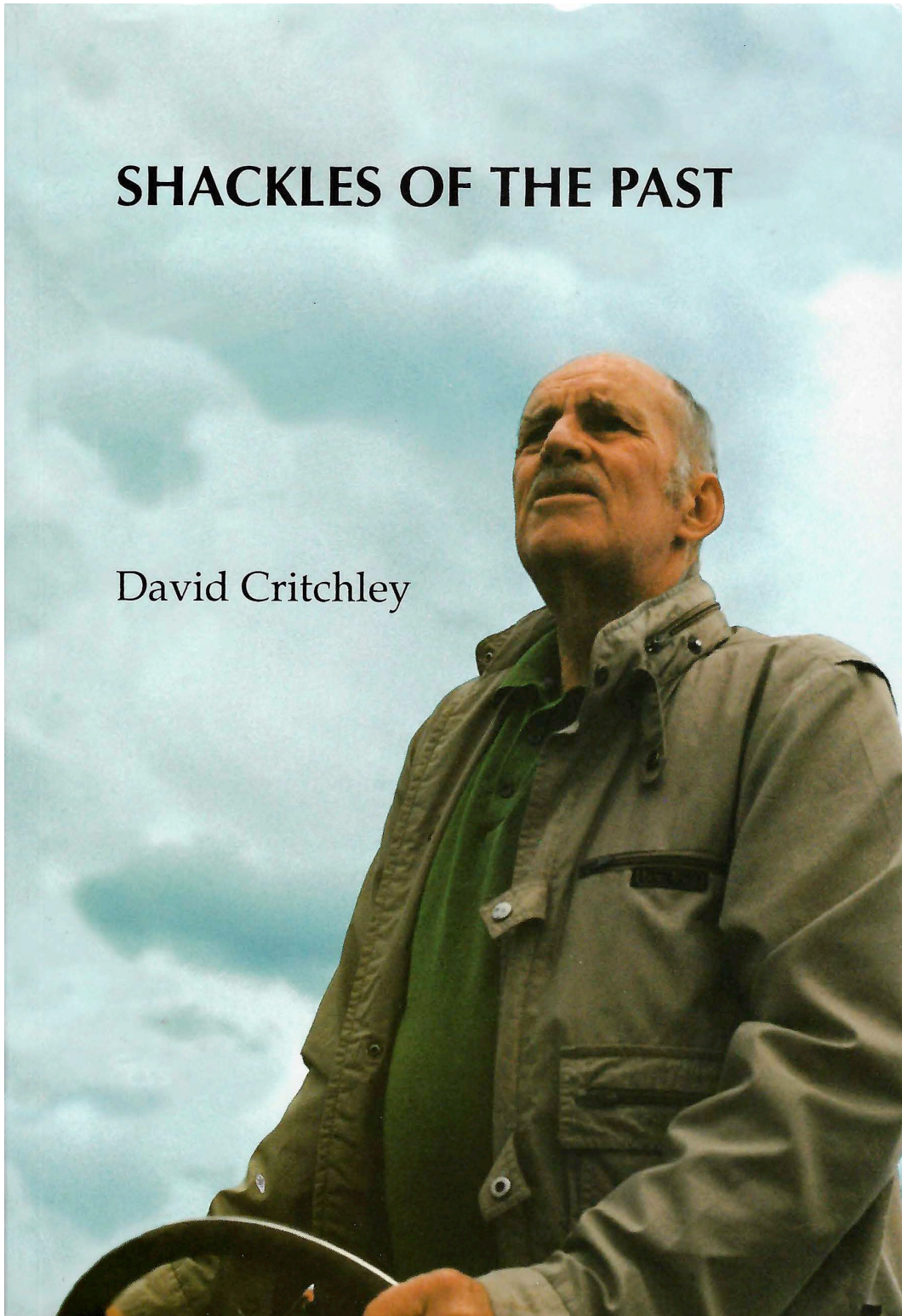


# SHACKLES OF THE PAST

David Critchley



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## DAVID MCCULLOCH CRITCHLEY

David was born in the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital in Bermuda on 22nd July, 1925, the elder son of John and Hazel (Lusher) Critchley. His brother, Trevor, was born six years later on 19th July, 1931.

David attended Saltus Grammar School where, he freely admitted, the discipline of academia held no lure for him. However, he did excel at English Literature. He had no trouble focusing on the sports field and was known for his skill at cricket and soccer.

At Mount Allison Academy in Sackville, New Brunswick, David finished his secondary schooling; he graduated from the University in 1947 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He married Molly Simmons, whom he met at Mount Allison in 1948. David graduated from the University of Toronto in 1949 with his Master's in Social Work.

After working with the Broadview YMCA in Toronto, in 1951 David returned to Bermuda, where he held the position of Youth Organiser for the Social Welfare Board. His daughter Wendy was born in 1952.

David returned to Canada in 1953 and for the next 19 years held positions in Edmonton, Alberta (Coordinator of Youth for the City of Edmonton); Winnipeg, Manitoba (Director of The Children's Home of Winnipeg); and Halifax, Nova Scotia (Associate Professor at the Maritime School of Social Work). His daughter, Beth, was born in Toronto in 1954 and his sons Spencer and Owen were born in Edmonton in 1958 and 1962, respectively.

Throughout his professional career in Canada, David was a freelance commentator with CBC Radio and TV. In Winnipeg, he hosted a half-hour television programme on the CBC called *All In The Family*.

David returned to Bermuda in 1972 to work in the Bermuda Government, first as Director of Social Services and then as Permanent Secretary for Health and Social Services, a position he held until his retirement in 1988. He authored two books. *Shackles of the Past* and *How Many Times Must A Man Turn His Head*.

David suffered from an inherited kidney disease and his health began to fail in 1990. He passed away in Canada on 16th September, 1993, with his wife, Molly, and his four children at his bedside. His ashes are buried near the seaside in Northport, Nova Scotia, where he had spent his summers since he and Molly were married.

On 12th October, 1993, a service of thanksgiving was held in David's memory at the Anglican Cathedral in Hamilton, Bermuda.

## P R E F A C E

H. DAVID ARCHIBALD  
*Former Royal Commissioner*

This book, *Shackles of the Past*, is a clear statement of David Critchley's great commitment to the welfare of his fellow Bermudians. It is an explicit review of many of the major social problems facing the people of Bermuda, especially the young. David, in his articulate style, establishes clearly the positive relationship between family life, education of children in a nurturing environment, and the development of mature, positively motivated adults — a theme that was omnipresent throughout his professional career.

I met David Critchley first when I arrived in Bermuda as a Royal Commissioner and spent many hours with him during the two-year life of the Commission. It was a privilege to work with him during the course of my inquiries.

I remember vividly my first formal meeting with the Minister of Health, and David in his capacity as Permanent Secretary. The offices of the Minister and David's were separated by a secretary-receptionist's office. While I was waiting for the Minister, David's

voice carried loud and clear from his office to the Minister's: "Minister, you can't do that! Don't even think about it!" No hesitation! No equivocation!

David could never be accused of neutrality when fundamental human issues were at stake, nor was he ever the victim of unsettled opinions. A clear, specific and well-articulated position was generic to his approach to matters of importance to the life and well-being of Bermudians. He adhered strongly to the school of those who held convictions — not just opinions.

He gave strong voice to his vision for Bermuda and spoke often and loudly. The lives of Bermudians are much better because of him.

David was especially articulate when he spoke about the young people and their needs. I remember his insightful and moving presentation to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Use and Misuse of Illicit Drugs and Alcohol, when he declared that "an alarming number of Bermudians pass through their homes, schools and other institutions without having sufficient positive experience with adults, whether they be parents, teachers, clergymen or friends. A caring, nurturing relationship is essential if a person is to take his place in the community as an asset, rather than a liability. Furthermore it is crucial that the young, indeed all of us know what it is to be understood, cared for and loved by persons we can admire because of their personal integrity and honesty."



The deepest and most lasting impression that he made upon those who knew him well, or who met him for the first time, was simply his sincerity, and his genuine, downright goodness.

David was never plagued with uncertainty about the major issues facing his beloved country and countrymen. Though he spoke frequently on programs, and research, and such, his real and abiding interest was always in people. They came first!

All this was eminently clear in his book *Shackles of the Past*, which in my opinion should be studied by all those who care about Bermuda and its future. David's life was a mixture of gentleness and determination, of deepest love for his wife Molly and their family, and of great dedication to social justice for all peoples.

“NATURE IN ALL ITS GLORY MAY WELL STAND UP AND SAY TO ALL THE WORLD, ‘THIS WAS A MAN!’”

*I have been a citizen of the world all my adult life. I have lived abroad and have traveled so much in the world that I know, with the certainty of long experience, that people are the same wherever you may go; and that they are divided from each other only by misunderstanding and prejudice.*

Armand Hammer

*To my wife Molly and my children*

*Wendy*

*Beth*

*Spencer and*

*Owen*

## FOREWORD

I left Bermuda to study at Mount Allison Academy in Sackville, New Brunswick in September 1942. I continued at Mount Allison University and graduated with an Arts degree in 1947. Then I attended the University of Toronto School of Social Work and received my Master of Social Work in 1949. My first position was Community Secretary at Broadview Y.M.C.A. in the east end of Toronto.

I returned to Bermuda in 1951 as Youth Organiser with the Bermuda Social Welfare Board.

In 1951, there were white youth clubs and black youth clubs. When my opinions about segregation and discrimination became known, invitations from white youth clubs became infrequent, but I was kept busy by groups of young black Bermudians and their leaders.

When I decided to return to Canada in 1953, a black Bermudian friend pleaded with me to remain. He felt it was important that issues like segregation and discrimination not be seen as only of concern to black Bermudians.

## *Foreword*

My response was: “I don’t think this Island will ever change and there’s no way I’m going to live and raise a family in a country where segregation is the law of the land.”

But this was only one of the two major reasons I believed Bermuda would never change, at least not in my lifetime. It was also disheartening to find that many black Bermudians advised me not to rock the boat for fear of making things worse for them. Sometimes there was a postscript reminder that the situation would be remedied in the afterlife. I was young, impatient, and not prepared to wait.

The Bermuda I returned to in 1972 as Director of Social Services was a Bermuda that I had predicted in 1953 I would never see. Some explain the dramatic and bloodless changes by the foresight of the powers that be, especially Sir Henry Tucker. Others attribute the changes to the fear of riots and consequent damage to the tourist trade.

Because of the changed Bermuda I now find myself in and because of some of the changes that have occurred in my thinking since 1953, I have decided that it would be of some value to me and, hopefully, interest to others to comment on the Bermuda of today as I see it, without having to worry about the restrictions on freedom of speech that are imposed on civil servants.

When I left the Island in 1953, my experiences had made it very easy for me to divide the world into “us” and “them”. Perhaps it was valid then,

## Foreword

although I know I had my own brand of intolerance in those days. Since returning in 1972, I have become convinced that if there is an enemy, it is us and our shackles of the past.

This book is about some of those shackles and what I think we can do about them, if enough of us can lead the way by rising above party politics, religion, colour, and class.

I am grateful to Molly, my wife, my daughter Wendy and my son Spencer for proofreading the manuscript. Apart from the great help this was, it gives me people to blame for any errors that are still there.

Permission to use a quotation from Armand Hammer's fascinating autobiography. *Hammer*, (Simon & Schuster, Ltd., London, 1987) was kindly granted by the publishers. And the same courtesy was extended by the publishers of *The Structure of Evil*, by Ernest Becker (George Braziller, Inc., New York, 1968). I am also fortunate to have obtained Dr. Victoria Williams' permission to quote extensively from her publication *Synthesis of Research on Effective Teaching Practices*.

## *Chapter 1*

### LOOKING BACK

As I said in the Foreword, when I left Bermuda in 1953 it was with the pessimistic conviction that “Bermuda would never change, certainly not in my lifetime.”

When I returned in 1972, I spent the first year or so mentally blinking in disbelief as I compared the Bermuda of 1953 with the Bermuda of a scarce nineteen years later.

I often recalled the white Bermudian childhood friend who, a few weeks before my departure for Canada, was standing with me in the lobby of the stamp section of the Hamilton Post Office. In exasperation, he asked: “David, what’s so damn wrong with this Island? Just give me one example of something you won’t find in Canada. And don’t tell me they don’t have prejudice there.”

“Look around you. Don’t you see anything wrong?”

He looked around him. “What the hell’s wrong with the Post Office?” Then, as his mind allowed

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him to take in what I was getting at, he began; “Jesus, David, you don’t mean ...?”

“That’s exactly what I mean. Why aren’t there any black ...?”

He couldn’t wait to let me finish before grabbing my arm and moistening his lips in distaste as he contemplated buying and licking stamps handled by black Bermudians.

“The day I see a black spade sitting in one of those seats. I’ll get a shotgun and blast her ass off or I’ll leave the Island. I swear to God, David, I’m not kidding.”

And this from a young man who as a child was daily bathed and fed by a black Bermudian maid, and who wouldn't have known how to fire a shotgun if he had been able to get one.

Until he died a few years ago, that same white Bermudian was still here and buying stamps, more often than not from black hands.

Yes, the times they have changed. The scorecard is not bad at all, even though it has been largely a matter of Bermuda catching up with where many other countries already were in 1953.

The following is a list of the major outstanding problems that existed when I left the Island 35 years ago. I have also noted some of the improvements that have taken place.

The Franchise is available at 21 years of age to those who register in advance, although a



### *Looking Back*

major complaint is that voters are required to re-register annually.

Segregation and Discrimination are now punishable offenses.

Discrimination against women is prohibited by the Human Rights Act and women are increasingly occupying senior positions, especially in government.

Social and economic security have been improved by the introduction of compulsory contributory hospital insurance for employed persons. However, those who are unemployed must provide for their own hospitalization through private insurance. As a result, Government has to provide a sizable sum annually for those who are not covered by insurance and who are being further stigmatised by being labeled indigent. This lack of universal coverage for medical and hospital care means that individuals and groups regularly sponsor fund-raising events for those who fall between the lines. They are to be admired for their efforts, but it is surprising that they never express concern that some individuals still have to depend on private charity when they require hospital or medical care.

There are written guidelines to determine if a person is eligible for financial assistance. In 1953, it depended on the whims of parish clerks and varied from parish to parish. Bermuda now has contributory and non-contributory pensions and unions

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negotiate improvements in areas affecting the health and security of their members.

High prices and low wages and salaries have become controversial issues. In 1953, they were merely facts of life.

Government funds are allocated for projects debated and approved by Parliament. In 1953, Bermudians had very little to say in how money was spent by Government since Bermudians who did not own land could not vote.

Facilities for Bermudians are a major area of Government attention, especially housing. However, the cost of houses, including government-built homes, is beyond the means of many Bermudians. There are also commitments to a new prison, sports stadium, renovations and additions to St. Brendan's Mental Hospital, and a number of other public projects.

Training for Bermudians is no longer based on the belief that black Bermudians are on earth to do the unskilled and blue-collar work. Now, a variety of Government and privately sponsored scholarships and bursaries are available, although there are not always enough applicants. We also have the Bermuda College and the Hotel Training College.

Trade Union and Civil Rights Legislation are now realities. Some accuse the Bermuda Industrial Union of holding the country up to ransom when it threatens a general strike if its demands are not met.

## *Looking Back*

This has led to suggestions that the curbs placed on unions in the United Kingdom might be justified in Bermuda.

Cultural life has bloomed. The Arts are represented by groups that regularly bring their efforts to the attention of the public, although there are complaints that facilities are generally inadequate. Also noteworthy is the number of books published by residents, surely unequaled by any other country with a population of less than sixty thousand.

Crime, illegitimacy, and prostitution remain everyday facts of life, although there is evidence that very young girls are now involved with prostitution to buy drugs for themselves and/or their boyfriends, who are often much older than they are.

An interesting development that Bermuda has in common with the United States and other countries is that an increasing number of women are choosing to raise their children as single parents because they believe the fathers of their children would not make responsible husbands and parents. Unfortunately, many mothers are run ragged trying to make both ends meet, and Government has only recently begun to relieve the burden by tightening up the legislation on maintenance payments. However, it would be helpful if consideration were given to some of the measures available for single parents in the Scandinavian countries.

In the chapters that follow, I won't be dealing with the issues summarised above. All are now the

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concern of one or more organised groups. Instead, I will be considering problems that I think have been inadequately understood or confronted. They should not be insurmountable if we don't let the shackles of the past so divide us that we are unable to understand and deal with the realities of the present or prepare for whatever the future holds in store.

## *Chapter 2*

### BY GUESS AND BY GOLLY

The ready availability of reliable information is the lifeblood of effective decision making. Its absence in Bermuda, especially in the area of the well-being of Bermudians, is a major problem. We are polarised by our prejudices and ideologies because we lack sound data, which is the only reliable antidote to such divisive and destructive forces.

For example, what information is available concerning the following subjects?

Bermudians are said to enjoy the highest standard of living in the world. Yet, at any one time, over three hundred families receive financial assistance. Who are these Bermudians and why have they not been able to keep up with the rest of us? Are they largely responsible for their situations, or were they victims of factors beyond their control, or both?

What is considered to be poverty in Bermuda and what minimum possessions and income are required to avoid living in poverty?

What is the percentage of black to white Bermudi-

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ans who are clients of our courts, penal institutions, mental hospital, and welfare, special education, drug addiction, and AIDS services?

Is it true that the number of vagrants has increased and, if so, why?

Why, as has been claimed by authorities at St. Brendan's Mental Hospital, is the rate of schizophrenia twice as high in Bermuda as the average for the world?

What evidence is there to support the view that no significant impact will be made on the problem of drug abuse until the financial incentive is removed by the legalization and/or decriminalization of hard as well as so-called "soft" drugs?

Research in other countries has shown that, as a rule, juvenile delinquents, criminals, the mentally ill and emotionally disturbed, those who fail in school or who are behaviour problems, and others who are cause for concern have a low self-image. Is this true of Bermudians and are there differences in self-concept between black and white and ethnic or religious groups?

To what degree is it realistic to expect to Bermudianise the work force? If there are areas where it is unlikely that this can be accomplished, what are they and why can't Bermuda meet the need? It is said that there are not enough Bermudians to go around. If this is so, why doesn't Government say so and clearly spell out the implications in terms of the employment of individuals from other countries?

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What is the evidence to support the commonly-held belief that the disadvantages of income tax on personal incomes outweigh the advantages? How adequate and equitable are the present methods of raising revenue? And, in view of the escalating demand and need for services, where will the money come from?

Has prejudice increased or decreased between: black and white Bermudians, native-born white and native-born black, black status Bermudians and black or white born Bermudians, white status Bermudians and white born Bermudians, and Portuguese Bermudians and black or white Bermudians?

What is really going on in our schools? What is known about the children who fail or are behaviour problems?

Is child abuse and violence by men against women on the increase, as is claimed, or is it being reported by more people because of the attention it is receiving?

In view of concern about the harmful effect of traffic congestion on visitors and residents, why has there not been a study to determine the advantages and disadvantages of providing free ferry and bus service for residents, while continuing to charge tourists?

What are the facts of life about today's Bermuda?

The answer is that in some of the most crucial areas we just don't know. Some say we should count our blessings and be thankful we don't have

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the problems of the Caribbean and other less advantaged countries. Others feel quite helpless in the face of what they see as a society that is fast losing its underpinnings of decency. In between are those who are too busy living from one paycheque, bill, and weekend to the next to give much time to wondering what it's all about. They just seem to be hoping for the best or resigned to the worst.

But no matter what the point of view about the state of affairs in Bermuda, it's all conjecture and opinion. One opinion is as good as the next.

We can provide information on tourist arrivals and departures, the cost of living, births, deaths, and diseases, who is studying what in overseas universities, average family size, crime, out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Yet we lack other vital information that would enable us to determine the state of our well-being and focus our efforts on those areas that are most in need of attention.

Without such information, we do battle with whatever the cause of the day is — child abuse, AIDS, drugs — but nothing seems to change and often it appears to be getting worse. There was a Commission on Crime in the 1970s and the Commissioner of Police has called for another one.

I believe the gaps in essential information and the failure to analyse what is available are largely due to Fear, Paternalism, and Confidentiality.

First, to Fear.

When I returned to Bermuda in 1972, I suggested



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to Government that Bermuda should regularly collect and publish what I referred to as well-being indicators, as it did economic indicators. I said that one was meaningless without the other and that a booming economy and high standard of living were not necessarily accompanied by well-being.

I noted that self-concept was one indicator of the state of well-being of a society. I said I had contacted Dr. William Fitts, the individual who had developed the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, and he was excited by the prospect of the Scale being employed on a country-wide basis. Although it had never been used with an entire population, he saw no reason why it could not be. He had indicated he would be happy to assist in any way he could.

The initial response from Government was positive. I said I thought research first should be conducted with schoolchildren and suggested that it be a joint project of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Social Services, which includes Prisons. I was authorised to proceed.

Dr. Fitts came to Bermuda, and a meeting was arranged with the official in the Ministry of Education whose agreement was required for the research to be undertaken. He listened to Dr. Fitts attentively and his questions showed he was quite knowledgeable about self-concept and its potential for identifying individuals in school who might need special attention and assistance, even before their behaviour made it obvious.

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I listened to the discussion between Dr. Fitts and the official with a feeling close to bliss. At last, two of the most important Ministries on the Island were not only going to collaborate — a rarity in my experience — but soon they would be in a position to base their efforts on sound information about the needs and problems of children.

But then I suggested we prepare a timetable for implementation. The official, kindly but firmly, said: “David, there will be no self-concept research in this Ministry while I am here.” I thought I had short-circuited discussion before all his questions had been dealt with and asked him if he still had doubts about self-concept research.

“No, David, I have no doubts at all. Dr. Fitts has merely reinforced my conviction that self-concept is a most important determinant of behaviour.”

I wondered if he was concerned parents might object.

“No, not parents. I’m the one who will never agree to such research.”

He didn’t have to be particularly observant to see I was bewildered.

“David, all the years you were away, I was here in Bermuda. Those things that made you leave, I had to live with. First, I lived with laws and practices based on the belief that black people are inferior. Now that official segregation has been ended and schools have been integrated, I have to be very careful nothing is done to support or rein-

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force the belief that the black Bermudian is not as bright as the white. And that is why there will be no self-concept research in Bermuda schools while I'm here."

I noted that the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale had nothing to do with intelligence.

"I'm aware of that, but low self-concept in black Bermudians will be used against them."

Dr. Fitts asked if he was assuming that the self-concept of black children would be lower than that of white. He noted that recent research had indicated that this should not be taken for granted.

"I appreciate that, but I'm just not prepared to take the risk."

"But, surely," said Dr. Fitts, "unless someone believes blacks are inferior, if black schoolchildren were shown to compare unfavourably with white children, it would merely indicate they were missing out on something in their lives that required correcting."

But it was not to be. And it remains one of the major disappointments of my life in terms of lost opportunities.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Fitts," and he obviously was, "but I've always lived on this Island, except for the years I was away getting an education and I'm afraid I don't have the same confidence in the common sense of white Bermudians that you do."

I had to respect his feelings. I knew something of the difficulties and slights he had experienced in a

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white man's society. He certainly had more than earned the right to his opinion.

"In other words, you think there's too much of yesterday still with us?" I asked.

"I couldn't have said it any better," he replied.

And that was the end of the discussion and the possibility of getting started on some truly significant investigations of the state of well-being of our schoolchildren, not just with the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, but with other diagnostic and analytic tools.

And that was Fear with a capital F. Understandable, but Fear, nonetheless. Don't ask the questions for fear of the answers and what harmful use might be made of them. It was also a sad commentary on whatever his experiences had been with white Bermudians.

I decided all was not lost. We could still proceed by using the Scale with children in their homes. This would have the added advantage of including adults, which would allow us to compare the self-concepts of adults and children. I consulted again with Dr. Fitts and we developed and costed a proposal.

Since the recommendation to do self-concept research had originally been so well received by Government, I foresaw no objections, especially since we would have been able to find the required money in our budget. But Fear again raised its worried head.

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“Couldn’t this have a backlash as far as tourists are concerned?” I was asked by a Government Minister.

“Backlash? You must be joking. What’s self-concept got to do with tourists?”

“If you were a tourist and read headlines in *The New York Times* about the low self-concept of Bermudians, would you want to come and spend your money here?” It took me back to the 1950s when I was told by white Bermudians that Americans would not come to an integrated Bermuda.

I pointed out that visitors often comment on the assurance they find in the white and black Bermudians they meet.

The Ministerial mountain did not move.

Then there was the Well-Being Survey that only became public when it was leaked to the press. And when human service professionals asked for the Appendix to the report so they could check the conclusions that were drawn, Government refused. Consequently, they decided that the findings had been distorted and rejected them.

Again Fear, although I can’t see what there was to be afraid of since in most respects the survey found a fair amount of satisfaction on the Island. Perhaps it was because on some subjects surveyed there was a significant minority of Bermudians who were discontented.

There was the impressive research by the Child Development Project, conducted under the super-

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vision of Dr. Sandra Scarr, an internationally recognised authority on child development.

I still have painful memories of the arguments among civil servants in the Ministries of Health and Social Services and Education about what should be included in the reports of the findings of the research. Here again, the fear that black children would compare unfavourably with white children was the essence of the concern. As a result, a certain amount of rewriting was required. However, as far as I know, not one report has been made available to the public.

There were the discussions I do not feel at liberty to repeat that indicated there was a fear to publish information because it might cause discontent. Discontent in the minds of many Bermudians is associated with riots and riots mean no tourists.

Even when reports are published, there is usually a delay before they are made available. One is left with the suspicion that Government frantically scrambled to obtain a response to any negative content. As a result, many are convinced that Government fabricates its statements on such occasions. However, it was my impression that the usual procedure when the truth hurt was to resort to explanations that included the positive, but omitted the negative. This, I suppose, comes pretty close to lying, or, at least, is several steps away from the truth.

These have been just a few of my many experi-

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that have led me to conclude that a major reason we lack so much vital information about Bermuda — and especially about the well-being of Bermudians — is Fear.

Paternalism is another reason we are so short of information.

Paternalism is defined in *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* as “A system under which an authority treats those under its control in a fatherly way esp. in regulating their conduct and supplying their needs.”

I regard Paternalism as authoritarianism with the gloves on. Authoritarian is defined by *Webster's* as “relating to or favoring blind submission to authority.”

Paternalism is not only the prevailing ideology in Government. It is rampant in our homes and schools. Therefore, since the child is father of the man, it shouldn't surprise us when we find it in Government, unions, and businesses.

When Paternalism doesn't produce the desired results, authoritarianism is often its replacement. “If you won't behave when I'm nice to you, then perhaps this will bring you to your senses.” In the home, it can lead to family conflict, divorce, and child and spouse abuse, and, in a country that falls on hard times or social disorder, to fascism.

Paternalism, like Fear, is a shackle of the past that is hostile to honest human relations and a democratic and open society. I also see Paternalism as a

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national expression of what, when it occurs on an international level, is the state of not being quite ready for independence, that is, colonialism.

Consider the affair of the Club Med beach.

A United Bermuda Party backbencher said he had learned that, contrary to what had been stated by the former Minister of Works, Bermudians had access to the beach at St. Catherine's Point. The former Minister's successor said he would look into it, a reply that was remarkable in its own right since it was mature and appropriate and a refreshing change from the usual Government — and, for that matter, Opposition — response of resorting to bluster, evasion, and denial when confronted by an awkward situation.

The Minister reported back to the House of Assembly that his review had revealed the backbencher was correct. The beach was open for public use under certain conditions, such as when Club Med was not full or did not have organised activities on it.

The former Minister of Works was asked to justify his firmly stated previous claim that the agreement with Club Med prohibited public use of the beach. He said he would have to consult his files. This in itself was surprising in view of his original unequivocal announcement that the beach was reserved for Club Med's exclusive use.

The former Minister reported that the new Works Minister was correct. The agreement with Club Med



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had provided for some public use. He then explained his previous deception of his Parliamentary colleagues and the public by saying, to quote a report in *The Royal Gazette*, “Bermudians were never told they could use the Island’s most historic beach in case they got confused ... They could have been ‘aggravated’ if they found they could sunbathe on St. Catherine’s beach one day and not the next.”

The Shadow Minister of Works unkindly proclaimed this explanation “a load of bull”, and a scathing Editorial appeared in *The Royal Gazette* charging the former Minister with reaching “a new height of arrogance and contempt for the public.”

I personally have not found the Minister to be arrogant. But I do think he gets into trouble when he is badly advised by civil servants or when his good intentions are not sufficiently disciplined by an understanding of the complexity of a subject. This may lay him open to the charge of being a know-it-all or arrogant.

Arrogant or not, the Minister’s words and actions over the years do qualify him as a well-meaning paternalist. I would add that I wouldn’t be at all surprised if the Minister and the Government were keeping a portion of the truth to themselves. It was the first time I can recall the Minister not only reading from a prepared statement, but obviously ill at ease in doing so. It certainly left me with the impression that something was being hidden for fear it might be embarrassing to Government.

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If this uncharitable suspicion is correct, we have an excellent example of Fear and Paternalism as bedfellows. Certainly, Government and the Minister were obviously fearful of the strong objections that greeted the explanation concerning why the public was kept in ignorance of the terms of the agreement with Club Med.

Of course, there is the possibility that the Minister really believed that the agreement with Club Med prohibited public use. But if so, why not say so? Probably Fear. Fear of embarrassment (a self-concept problem) and/or fear of giving grounds for Opposition derision and charges of Government ineptitude, which always carries with it the fear of losing votes.

Then there is the problem of Confidentiality. It occurs in those situations where information is not provided because it is felt it would embarrass the individual(s) concerned and violate principles of confidentiality, which, of course, should not be taken lightly.

I faced this dilemma as Permanent Secretary of Health and Social Services when clients went to the media with a complaint of being treated unfairly.

Since my investigations showed such charges were usually unfounded, I began to keep a record of all complaints that reached the media. When I stopped keeping count, of 26 that came to my attention, 24 were without foundation and two were legitimate grievances about staff behaviour.

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The dilemma was twofold. There was the Ministry's assurance to clients of confidentiality of any information obtained from them. This problem was solved when support from the Minister was obtained for a policy of informing clients that, if they went public with a complaint we did not find to be legitimate, we would release any information about them that we considered necessary to give a balanced picture.

We had no satisfactory answer to our second dilemma. Often, clients who went to the press were so inadequate and demoralised it would have been 'dirty pool' to have revealed the facts. In such instances, on the assurance it would be kept in confidence, we gave reporters sufficient information to make them aware of the facts. This deterred some, but I was shocked by the number of occasions that the desire for sensationalism and an exclusive story led them to rush to air or print.

One glaring example was complaints from two individuals about The Canadian Hotel which provided several days of headlines and unfounded criticism of Ministry ineptitude and hard-heartedness. Since I was fully briefed on the facts of the situation, I can confidently state that the reporters involved probably would have raised eyebrows at *The National Enquirer*.

I also know that Confidentiality is a dilemma faced by Government in other areas such as the refusal of status or work permits. In several such

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instances, I have had knowledge of information that, in my opinion, more than justified Government's position, but it was felt the individuals would needlessly suffer if the truth were known. Frankly, I would have gone public, but there was a reluctance to do so, sometimes from kindness, but more often because individuals who provided information were unwilling to be identified. It was also evident Government distrusted and feared the media, especially *The Royal Gazette*.

I think this is legitimately described as a dilemma, especially since information provided in confidence can be erroneous or malicious or, though true, cannot be proven in a court of law. Unfortunately, the failure to give the reasons for denying status or work permits reinforces what I believe is widespread questioning of the ethics and integrity of Government. In the absence of a Government response, the worst is assumed.

Even more serious is the fact that, if status or a work permit is denied to a black applicant, many black Bermudians attribute it to race prejudice. I am not in the know on such matters, but I doubt that prejudice is the reason in most instances or, if there is prejudice, it is not the basic grounds for refusal. I suspect it is more often related to whether an applicant is judged to be radical in his opinions or a troublemaker or has a reputation for questionable private behaviour (such as that favourite Bermudian pastime called "screwing around", especially if

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it's with other people's partners). Certainly, I have absolutely no question at all that, if I were a non-Bermudian applicant for status, I wouldn't have a hope since there are still those in Government who think I'm an agent of a foreign power.

But explanations of why so much vital information is not available are not important. The fact is the information isn't obtained in the first place or isn't published and it should be. I am convinced its absence and the failure to appreciate its importance to sound decision-making is a major reason that so many of Government's responses are ad hoc and impromptu and so often backfire.

The errors in costing programmes such as the airport expansion and the incinerator are examples of inadequate attention being paid to the information collection and analysis stage of decision making.

The problem is further compounded when Government programmes are hastily prepared prior to an election or the presentation of the annual Estimates. In such instances, the time is not available to obtain the required information and so Government proceeds with the best it has and often lives to rue the day. Also, as far as Health and Social Services are concerned, Government frequently fails to consult its own authorities or is impatient with questions and suggestions that do not support the Minister's or Cabinet's often uninformed opinions.

Government has been most fortunate that the Opposition has been so poorly prepared and

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informed during the debates of the Estimates. I trust this will change, now that the Opposition has more manpower available as a result of its gains in the recent election.

Even more serious is the fact that the programmes aimed at dealing with problems such as drug abuse and crime are not based on any reliable evidence that they will be successful. Also alarming is the research that suggests that some programmes can make a problem worse. This appears to be especially true in the area of drugs.

Although remedial programmes are often deficient in staff and funds, they are costly, and, when they do not produce the desired results, blaming becomes the order of the day. But never, in my experience, was it ever pointed out that there was no evidence to support the belief that the programmes would be successful.

The proposed residential rehabilitation centre for females with drug problems is a current example of a programme founded on nothing more than good intentions. Indeed, the sponsoring group proceeded in spite of being informed that male addicts far outnumber female. Also, experience in Bermuda has shown that, at any one time, few persons with drug problems are motivated to 'kick the habit', unless, of course, they appear in court and are trying to avoid imprisonment.

Of course, I am not suggesting we should not do all we can to help drug abusers, but arrangements

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already exist for overseas treatment and it has been difficult to find more than one or two addicts a year with the required motivation. This has been especially true of females. Certainly there are more pressing unmet needs than the proposed centre. One example would be programmes to improve the self-esteem of children so they won't try to escape the realities of life through drugs. Nevertheless, the centre undoubtedly will be established and Government has already given such a guarantee in the recent Speech from the Throne. Not only that, but it has not responded to the quite unfair criticism that it has been dragging its heels. The fact is that the sponsors originally stressed that they did not want and would not be seeking Government support, as I was told in no uncertain terms when I sought evidence of the need for the centre. Government's unwillingness to defend itself is perhaps because the programme is the brainchild of the Bermuda Christian Ministerial Association.

I would add that the same comments apply to the proposed STAR Hostel. Its sponsors have never acknowledged that they have been offered Government accommodation. They have also insisted they do not want Government involvement or support and have resisted and seemingly resented efforts to obtain documentation that the need is sufficiently great to justify the establishment of a hostel in Bermuda. It is my belief that the fear of losing votes by seeming to oppose efforts to help addicts and

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victims of AIDS explains Government's refusal to require more evidence than it now has to support the need for the programmes in their present forms.

Although my criticisms have for the most part been directed at Government, a comparison of the February, 1989 Speech from the Throne and the reply of the Leader of the Opposition reveals the same reliance on generalities, unproven and untested assumptions, and well-worn platitudes.

Government is criticised for not mounting its long-promised war on drugs. Yet, the Opposition Leader can only offer the belief "... that the church leaders, union leaders, workmens' club leaders and other community organizations must be brought together to develop a programme to combat drug abuse." And this in the face of evidence that no such collection of individuals anywhere else has even been able to agree on the causes of drug abuse, much less what should be done about it.

I never cease to be amazed that no one seems to wonder what it is that is wrong with a society where so many people, young and old, can't face life without abusing alcohol or some other drug. But no, we blithely go our way proposing wars on drugs as though, in some unexplained way, they are the problem.

Also noteworthy is the fact that neither Government nor the Opposition refer to any of the specific proposals in the Report of the Royal Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. However, Government



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and Opposition are united in their support of the AIDS hostel and the residential rehabilitation centre for females.

A serious consequence of poorly thought-through and undocumented programmes is that their failure or, more usually, the absence of identifiable results is demoralizing to the sponsors and staff. It also reinforces the ranks of the “get tough” proponents of problem solving who, of course, have no more documentation to indicate their remedy will be successful than did the sponsors of the programme that failed to meet its objectives. Encouragement is also given to those who have concluded that Government is irresponsible, ineffective, and extravagant with the public purse.

None of which is conducive to democracy or sound human relations. Good intentions in this day and age are simply not good enough. Businesses that wish to remain viable and competitive have long since recognised the importance of market research. The stakes are much higher when human well-being is involved, and the day has long passed when funds are so plentiful that they can be thrown after hastily conceived programmes. In the absence of sound information, cost overruns are almost inevitable and priority-setting is made meaningless.

This applies especially to Education, Health, Recreation, and Social Services, which can become graveyards for failed programmes. Our financial and other resources are finite and will not long

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be able to survive impulsive and undocumented flights of fancy.

Unless we can begin to show that this democracy of ours can successfully deal with its problems, we will become an even more fertile breeding ground for bigotry and intolerance. We will encourage those who believe that change is best accomplished by “burn baby burn” or threats of violence. Demagogues and irrationality will rule the roost and, as so often happens in Bermuda, problems will be seen, distorted, and magnified through black and white coloured glasses.

Already there are increasing signs that muscle is replacing reason as the preferred means of producing whatever change the particular vested interest considers necessary.

This tiny Island just cannot afford a seat-of-the-pants approach to dealing with the challenges that threaten to transform our 20 or so square miles into a bastion of cement, intolerance, division, and other affronts to the human spirit and the well-being of those who live here.

The next chapter will suggest how we can improve the situation.

## Chapter 3

### CLEARING THE COBWEBS

Ernest Becker, in *The Structure of Evil: An Essay on the Unification of the Science of Man*, writes:

... we have failed to lay the groundwork for real democracy: we have omitted the thoroughgoing and continuing critical education of the whole population, upon which alone responsible representative government can be based ...

In consequence, public elections have become ... at best the uncritical celebration of the mediocre, the struggle to keep the status quo, and, at worst, the vicious tug of self-interest, the unobtrusive rallying of hate and fear, of faction against faction, man against man.

In Becker's eyes: "Dedication, where it exists, is a dedication to the cheerful smile and the serious look that commands the empty-headed vote."

As this is being written an election in Bermuda has just been held and the media were full of political faces, allegations, and promises. Comments I

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have heard indicate that many Bermudians would support much of what Becker has to say.

But what's to be done about Becker's "thoroughgoing and critical education of the whole population"?

A good way to begin would be to take the dust off Dr. Ted Gurr's report.

Dr. Gurr is an American university professor who is an authority on the causes of civil disorder. In 1982, the Premier accepted a recommendation that Dr. Gurr be consulted concerning conditions in Bermuda and advise whether a survey to determine the state of the well-being of Bermudians should be undertaken. It was also agreed that he would consider the nature of current social issues and the kinds of inquiry, including data collection, needed to diagnose social issues and to design and evaluate public policies.

Dr. Gurr brought several political and social scientists with him who were expert in areas (including race relations) that he felt would need to be investigated during his consultation.

During the week they were on the Island, Dr. Gurr and his colleagues met with a variety of individuals and groups. Prior to and during their visit, they read reports by the Statistical Department, the Commission on Crime, the Pitt Commission, and from other sources.

In his report that followed the consultation, Dr. Gurr expressed concern that much of the informa-

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tion he needed to assess the situation in Bermuda was not available. Other data that had been obtained contained potentially useful information that had not been extracted. It was recognised that extensive demographic and economic data were gathered and analyzed, but the kinds of information gathered by the Government were inadequate for the diagnosis of many current, including racially divisive, social issues.

As a result of finding there was little collaboration between Government departments in the preparation of new proposals, Dr. Gurr suggested the creation of a position of Policy Officer to coordinate the development and operation of research across Ministries. It was thought the Officer might be attached to the Ministry of Finance or the Statistician's Office. In addition to a Policy Officer, the Report recommended that a Social Research Officer develop and coordinate data, files, and analysis at Cabinet and Ministry levels. Also proposed was a computerised Social Research Database.

As a means of improving the Island's data collection, it was recommended that social and political scientists from Bermuda, the West Indies, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada be offered fellowships of \$2,500 to \$10,000 for six months to a year. Dr. Gurr thought researchers would be attracted by the charm, beauty, and climate and, as a result, the costs would be minimal.

Also recommended was a Social Scientist in Resi-

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programme. Each year, Government departments would propose ways in which a social scientist might aid them over a six- to twelve-month period. As with the Fellowship Programme, an added advantage was that no long-term commitments would be required by Government or the researchers. Examples of possible Scientist in Residence positions were Urban Planner in Residence and Public Administrator in Residence.

The report supported the establishment of a strong research section in the Ministry of Health and Social Services. And, in view of the absence of required information on the subject, it recommended that Government undertake a Well-being Survey and that it be repeated at regular intervals. Government's positive response to the recommendation that Dr. Gurr be consulted had left me with the hope that at last we were about to recognise the danger of flying blind out of the 20th and into the 21st century. This was reinforced by the decision that an interdepartmental committee of civil servants be formed to review Dr. Gurr's report.

The fact that such a committee was finally able to surmount departmental vested interests was an achievement in its own right. But then business returned to normal in that I heard nothing further from Government concerning the report of the interdepartmental committee, a major recommendation of which was that the Policy Officer should be attached to the Cabinet Office. It was felt that the

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Ministry of Finance was too committed to cutting costs to be objective.

To this day, I have not heard or read any Government reply to the Report's recommendations for remedying the gaps in information required for sound planning and decision making, or any recognition that this is a problem.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services had been annually requesting for at least a decade that it receive funds to employ a Research and Evaluation Officer. Following Dr. Gurr's report of his findings, the Ministry obtained permission to second such a person for a year, subject to review. As of this writing, there is no agreement that the position should be made permanent. In the meantime, proposals of more recent origin for many other Government positions have been accepted.

A lack of conviction is the only explanation I can offer for the failure to appreciate the importance of a research and evaluation capability in a Ministry so intimately acquainted with those who are having a hard time making a go of it. Not only would such a section evaluate the success of existing programmes, but it would also help to determine why so many Bermudians are running into difficulties.

Having said this, and since this chapter is considering specific proposals for action, I do think serious thought needs to be given to whether Government Departments should have their own research section, as some do now, or whether there should be a

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separate Government Department, perhaps as part of an expanded and, possibly, renamed Statistical Department. However, in view of Government's tendency to bend or control information to suit it, such a Department's freedom from political interference would have to be guaranteed.

But it doesn't take an expert to suggest we try to get at the facts about life in Bermuda. On January 26, 1989, a letter appeared in *The Royal Gazette* from "DISGUSTED" in which it was suggested that a survey be conducted among employers to determine why Bermudians are often passed over in favour of expatriates.

Disgusted suggested employers should be asked:

How often does your average Bermudian employee call in sick (or have someone else call in for them) compared to your average expat employee?; how does your average Bermudian's time keeping compare to expat coworkers?; how does your average Bermudian employee's job productivity compare with your average expat employee's?; how much time (and time is money) does your average Bermudian employee spend making personal phone calls or attending to personal matters outside the workplace compared to your average expat employee?

These are questions asked by many (usually white) Bermudians. They are dismissed by most black Bermudians I have spoken to as racist. They



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may well be, but they deserve an answer if they are not to continue to be among the many undocumented opinions that divide Bermudians into black and white, and expat, status, and native-born.

So far, I have mainly concentrated on the collection of information. But, as was suggested in the previous chapter, there is also the question of the provision of information that is available but kept from the public.

The Ministry of Education has over the years gathered considerable data about teachers and schoolchildren that has never been released. Some, of course, can legitimately be considered confidential, but there is much the public has a right to see.

For example, the Ministry is able to compare the academic results of the various public and private schools on the Island, but keeps this information to itself. Instead of public discussion of the reasons for the differences, people are left to draw their own conclusions, which I'm sure are often erroneous and add to the low opinion many people already have of our schools, especially the public ones.

Withholding the results of the Education Ministry's investigation of its successes and failures also has the added disadvantage of denying the Ministry public awareness and support for what I know have been its efforts to improve the education system.

Another area involving the provision of needed information relates to the frequent allegation that

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non-Bermudians are appointed to positions for which there were qualified Bermudian applicants.

Letters to the Editor in *The Royal Gazette* regularly contain such charges. One typical letter complained of having certificates for word processing “and yet no one will hire me.” The writer also expressed upset over having been employed for four months “and I think it is time I deserve a raise in wages. Instead the employer will hire a foreigner to do this and pay him more than what I get for only doing my job, plus pay his rent.” Another injustice was “I am also an entertainer and yet these big companies (hotels, etc.) would bring in their own entertainment and leave us Bermudian entertainers to be put out of a job.”

Dr. Gurr, who was referred to earlier, is the author of *Why Men Rebel*, a book that deals with the conditions in a society that can lead to civil disorder. His research and that of others indicates that a key factor is the extent to which people feel their situation is unfair relative to that of others in their country. That is, they don't make comparisons with the state of affairs in other countries, where conditions may be better or worse. Dr. Gurr describes this as feelings of relative deprivation.

We are regularly advised that we should be thankful that we do not have the problems of the Caribbean and other countries. But, according to Dr. Gurr, it's not elsewhere but what happens in one's own backyard that counts.

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The Letter to the Editor referred to above, as well as many other similar letters and comments I have heard, come pretty close to qualifying as expressing feelings of relative deprivation and of being unjustly treated. In the absence of any credible data that would contradict this, confrontations quickly become racial, which of course prevents any real examination and analysis of the causes of our problems.

Why are publicly expressed grievances not investigated and answered, especially when, as in the letter quoted from, the complainant's name is given? When there is no reply to complaints of injustice, they join the mountain of folklore in Bermuda that passes as fact and add to the feelings of many Bermudians that they are getting a raw deal in their own country. This, in turn, reinforces and exacerbates the racial and other divisions that even seemingly minor incidents can bring to the fore.

Also, by not investigating and reporting on complaints, an opportunity is sacrificed for Government to show it is (as it often claims) responsive. And, of course, if the allegations are true, it prevents the redress of a situation that sours all who are aware of it.

When I discussed this proposal with a friend of mine, he was concerned it might embarrass the individual concerned. That response sounds an awful lot like paternalism to me. The author of the letter who complained about her treatment on the

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job was a Bermudian with a grievance she obviously believed to be justified. We deny her an opportunity to learn that wrongs can be righted without resorting to threats or violence if we treat her like someone who needs to be protected from the pains of being alive, one of which is possible embarrassment if her allegations prove to be unjustified.

Paternalism, like colonialism, always has a hard time making up its mind when the time has arrived for someone to be granted independence and responsibility for one's actions and their consequences.

One hopeful sign is to be found in the reported observation by Dr. John Stubbs, the Premier's running mate in the February, 1989 election. According to *The Royal Gazette*, he said, "We must refute the inaccuracies which we've largely failed to do in the past." To which laudable resolve, I would only add, "and admit mistakes when they occur and declare a moratorium on double-talk."

Another problem is that too many of us are prone to blame others for our mistakes and shortcomings. Infancy is not too early to provide future citizens with opportunities to begin to test themselves and to discover their strengths and weaknesses. I'm convinced that much so-called adolescent rebellion is a reaction against parents who kept their children's wings clipped, instead of from birth onwards looking for opportunities for them to learn to fly.

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There should be investigations of allegations about bias in the granting of status or appointments to the civil service. The complainant should then be given the reasons for the decision and the information should be published if the allegation is publicly aired by the individual.

I appreciate that there are sometimes instances in which the reasons for a decision cannot be proven in law. This is especially true of applications for status. However, whether we like it or not, a country has a perfect right to decide to whom it wishes to grant citizenship. But, at the same time, the knowledge that decisions may have to be justified should ensure that Government doesn't act until it is as sure of its grounds as it can be.

Which leads to the suggestion that the time has come for the appointment of an Ombudsman who must be guaranteed complete independence. The office should not, for example, be subject to the control of a Minister or Ministry. The Department of Consumer Affairs would appear to be toothless when it comes to dealing with complainants, especially since Government (it is alleged) got rid of its first executive officer who obviously did her job without fear or favour.

Whatever is done about significantly improving information collection, analysis and supply, considerably more than what we are doing now is needed. But first there must be a Government response to the allegation that it is derelict and defi-

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cient in this area. As of this writing, as far as I know, the subject has never been mentioned, although an official endorsement of Dr. Stubbs' earlier reported comment would be a good place to begin.

We just can't continue to rely on harsh and extreme or — as we are fond of saying these days — “Draconian” measures to solve concerns that we don't begin and have made no serious attempt to understand. To compound the problem, there is often experience and research elsewhere that indicates that the recommended solutions have not worked where they have been tried.

One Draconian example appearing in the middle of the election campaign was headlined “Swan Plans Drugs War” on the front page of *The Royal Gazette* of January 25, 1989. Premier Swan was reported as saying:

These people who are trafficking in drugs have to understand there will be no comfort. We are no longer prepared to tolerate them and they have to suffer severe consequences ... We will shut these people off. They will have a bunk and some food. They shouldn't have TVs and radios and whatever else. I would even go so far as to take out the lightbulb, because that is what they have done to our young people's lives.

When asked whether he favoured the death sentence as a last resort, the Premier resorted to the politician's avoidance of a yes or no by saying,

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“Any action taken against these people which is within the accepted morality of society must be acted upon.” Presumably, since Bermudians appear to be comfortable with legislation which mandates capital punishment, the death penalty would be in order if harsh punishment failed.

The Premier was also reported as saying that Casemates Prison, which is to be replaced, might be retained and turned into a camp for drug abusers. Leaving out the massive cost of maintaining such a facility for the handful of major traffickers who have been convicted, it is alarming that neither the Premier nor his advisers appear to have been aware that his comments and proposals qualified as nonsense to anyone who doesn't espouse the Draconian as though it were the Second Coming.

There is no evidence that harsh punishment will deter traffickers or anyone else who stands to accumulate immense wealth illegally, especially since the risks of getting caught and convicted are minimal. The Drug Lords use others to handle and sell drugs. Usually, it's the little man who gets caught with the goods. The men at the top merely finance the operation by providing investment capital, as was recently noted by the Commissioner of Police. But apart from that, it is well known that one of the failings of criminals is that they often give no thought to the possible consequences of their actions.

A day after Premier Swan's comments, a brief

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report in *The Royal Gazette* said, “Sixteen ... traffickers were hanged in Tehran and two other cities ... raising to at least 122 the number executed this month in a major crackdown.” This brought to 138 the number of people who were obviously not deterred by the threat of death. And, granting we have no way of knowing the number who might have been deterred, we do know it doesn’t take many men at the top to keep a country supplied with drugs.

In my conversations with the Premier over the years, I have been impressed by his understanding of Bermuda, as have a number of authorities from abroad who have met with him. I hope he hasn’t become as out of touch with the facts of life and as hardnosed as he sounded in the statements quoted above.

An indication he may have been catering to the many Draconians he has in his Party, as well as to people’s anxieties about drugs, is to be found in his observation at the end of *The Royal Gazette’s* report: “We have to set a Bermudian menu and ask what does it take to develop a wholesome and healthy state of well-being.”

It is unusual and refreshing to hear a politician who seems to appreciate it takes two to create a drug problem — the user and the pusher. The Premier’s seemingly afterthought observation indicates he is aware of the substantial evidence those whose well-being is in good shape are not liable to



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abuse drugs, or, for that matter, to indulge in other personally or socially destructive behaviour. I suppose that, by ignoring this fact of life, it prevents us from asking ourselves where we went astray as parents or as a society.

If I am wrong in my assessment of the Premier, heaven help us. The Draconian hounds are obviously out for blood and we will really be in serious trouble if they are allowed to run wild. As noted earlier, it doesn't take much to provoke racial feelings and confrontation. Surely, we don't need another riot. We can only withstand just so much before running short of borrowed time.

In this day and age, patch and repair and off-the-top-of-the-head thinking is dangerous and only provides jobs for stretcher-bearers for the growing number of casualties of life in Bermuda. And it adds to the increasing cynicism about democratic principles and practices, including the effectiveness of parliamentary democracy as a means of fostering the growth of a just and more equitable society, which is, presumably, what democracy is all about.

In an election letter to voters in January 1989 in which the Premier listed the "modern day pressures" that affect the quality of life, he said: "Above all, I believe that only through long-term planning, consistent with clearly defined objectives applied over time can we achieve these goals." Amen to that, as long as the objectives and goals are known

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to, endorsed by, and, whenever possible, have had the prior involvement of Bermudians.

But to do long-term planning and objective-setting without sound information about the pluses and minuses of the quality of life in Bermuda is to fly blind over some uncharted and dangerous terrain. It is not difficult to identify the form in which our challenges show themselves, as the Premier did in his letter: drugs, AIDS, crime, pollution, over-development, the demands created by over-employment, job dissatisfaction and lack of affordable housing. It is evident what our major problems are. What we need is more information on why Bermuda (which is the envy of most tourists) is troubled by all the major problems known to large cities in North America.

In the post-mortem to the election that saw the United Bermuda Party lose eight seats. *The Royal Gazette* quoted the Party's chairman as saying; "We just didn't tell the people what we were doing." I think a more fundamental problem and concern of many disaffected voters was that Government didn't know what it was doing, in the sense that it hadn't really thought through the implications of its policies and programmes. Whatever Government does, it is to be hoped that it won't be persuaded by those who will undoubtedly opt for glossy PR programmes to restore the electorate's confidence (as it did with the propaganda bulletin concerning the airport).

Let's prove we are not wedded to suicidal igno-

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rance. We must begin to collect and publish reputable information about all aspects of life in Bermuda, especially as it relates to the well-being of Bermudians.

Government must stop thinking of information as “mine” and accept that democratic principles and effective problem-solving require a recognition that knowledge about life in Bermuda should be ours.

The words “We the People” in the Constitution of the United States are what democracy is all about. Those we elect are an expression of, but should not be allowed to usurp, that principle.

Karl Mannheim has no question about the possibility and importance of knowing what is going on in society:

But it is untrue, despite the skepticism so frequently put forward to the contrary, that we can know little or nothing about the working of our society and about the forms that action can take. We could know enough to know the main direction of events if we only had the will to control the situation that will otherwise enslave us, and the courage for the kind of thought necessary in our age.

The Quakers have a saying: “Speak truth to power.” A good start would be to give serious consideration to the suggestions reviewed and advanced in this chapter.

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## *Chapter 4*

### GOOD NEWS

Why would a man come home from work, slap his wife, and throw her to the ground because she didn't have his dinner ready?

Why would two 28-year-old Bermudians break into a 70-year-old man's home, beat him into a coma with a wrench, and leave him for dead?

Why do gangs of youths throw bottles, rocks, and other missiles at police?

Why do mothers out shopping with their crying and obviously tired young children handle them so roughly?

Why so much abuse of alcohol and drugs?

Why such friction between so many parents and children?

Why do so many marriages end in divorce and why is there so much unhappiness in many that don't?

Why so much human trouble in this "another world"?

Many reasons, of course. But the best evidence we have indicates that, when people are anti-social or

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self-destructive, usually the reason is to be found in the kind of human relations they've had with the important people in their lives, especially when they were growing up.

When I said at the beginning of the last paragraph "the best evidence we have," I am referring to the findings of hundreds of studies of children and adults using a wide variety of tests and other measures. I am not calling on the conclusions of these studies to silence any doubts or questions the reader may have about what follows, but rather to indicate that knowledge about human relations and human behaviour has advanced way beyond the time when one opinion was as good as another.

Thus, we now have a variety of ways to determine the state of an individual's or a society's well-being, and we can predict the negative consequences of unsatisfactory conditions. For example, it is possible to determine the state of emotional and mental well-being of Bermudians, in the same way that we now assess the state of our economic and physical health. This means that we have the know-how to report on such matters as how we feel about ourselves and each other, whether our satisfactions in life outweigh our dissatisfactions, and so on.

Now to the Good News that is the subject of this chapter.

I'll begin by summarizing the experience of Dr. Carl Rogers, the American psychologist. Years ago,

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Dr. Rogers said that, when he was most successful with those who came to him for help, he communicated three things: he was Empathic, Genuine, and had Unconditional Positive Regard or Respect for his clients.

Since Dr. Rogers made that observation, there have been a great number of studies of the ingredients of successful and unsuccessful counselling and other human relationships. At first, the major emphasis was on the outcome of counselling people who had personal problems. The measures used to determine the presence or absence of the qualities considered by Dr. Rogers to be important included rating scales. For example, one set of scales has five points for non-possessive warmth, nine for empathy, and five for genuineness (with one being low).

Research confirmed Rogers' experience. It also revealed something else: counselling could be for good or ill. For example, studies using the rating scales found that counsellors who had ratings of three or above tended to be helpful; but those who scored below tended not to be. Indeed, some clients of counsellors with low ratings were actually harmed.

The early research has been confirmed by the passing years. It has also expanded to include such persons as successful and unsuccessful parents, teachers, policemen and others. Although a variety of analytic measures and descriptive terms have been used, study after study has confirmed the

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importance of the human-relations skills identified by Dr. Rogers.

The following is a summary of the skills he considered fundamental to successful counselling.

“Unconditional positive regard” is the communication of respect, interest, and belief in the worth of a person, irrespective of the individual’s behaviour. This does not mean acceptance of undesirable behaviour, but that the individual feels valued as a person.

“Empathy” is present when we communicate that we understand a person’s feelings, problems, behaviour or point of view through his eyes.

“Genuineness” is the communication of comfortableness with oneself, without defensiveness, pretensions of being what one isn’t, or contradictions between what is said and what is really felt or believed. Such persons are usually described as honest, but research has shown that some people’s honesty is expressed destructively or at the wrong time.

A person who possesses the above qualities could be described as: approachable and without pretensions; shows respect for and understanding of the feelings and opinions of others; and is honest and forthright, but not in a way that belittles, undermines, or prematurely confronts people.

The best evidence we have indicates that such people — whether teachers, clergy, policemen, employees, businessmen, or friends — will be liable



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to be in harmony with themselves and good for the well-being of those with whom they come in contact.

It should come as no surprise that our prisons, mental hospital, divorce courts, health and welfare services, and school guidance service are full of people who have seldom had such relationships with their parents, teachers, or other adults who play an important part in the daily lives of our children.

So, what has been said so far in this chapter is that, just as we can specify the nourishment required for physical health, we are now able to describe with considerable confidence and precision the essential components of the nurture required for mental health.

It will perhaps have been noted that I used the word “skills” when referring to Empathy, Regard, and Genuineness. This has perhaps bothered those who believe you either have or don’t have these qualities. For example, people often refer to someone as a “born” teacher or leader. Some of us may be so constructed as to be especially sensitive, in the same way that artists are tuned in to colour and form, and musicians to sound. Few authorities nowadays believe that we come into the world with a blank slate. However, there is no question human relations skills can be taught and learned by anyone who is motivated to acquire or improve them.

For example, skill in listening is the “ticket of admission” to Empathy. Indeed, without it, there

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can be no Empathy because it is by listening that we tune in to another person's wavelength. And, if we have not developed our listening skills, there will almost inevitably be a lot of static and distortion in the messages we receive. When this happens, and no matter how interested in or concerned about the other person we are, a tension develops in the relationship as the individual begins to feel misunderstood or that we're not very interested.

And, when someone really needs a listening and understanding ear and it is not forthcoming, it makes it very difficult to communicate Regard. What meaning does Regard have if we have not shown that we understand a person's feelings and problems? "How can you like me if you don't really know me?" or, "If you really knew me, you'd be shocked." Genuineness is also a casualty because it is important that an individual experience Empathy and Regard to benefit from the honesty that is required in a relationship that fosters trust and growth.

But to return to the Good News about Listening. The fact is that a person who so desires can improve listening skill in a short period of time. Not only that, it can be measurably improved. In other words, it can be confirmed that improvement has taken place.

For example, there is much we know about the habits of good and bad listeners. This means that we can do something about it.

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Bad listeners tend too early in a relationship to say something like, “I know just how you feel.” When said prematurely it can leave the person with the feeling, “How can you know when you’ve only just met me?” Often, we are trying to show our concern and sympathy, but this can stand in the way of accurate listening which, in turn, keeps the door closed to Empathy. It’s usually better to check if we’ve understood what we’ve heard with a question such as, “Do you mean ...?”, rather than proclaiming, “I know exactly what you mean.” This is especially true when a relationship is first being established, since a question often encourages the individual to expand on or clarify what was said. This increases understanding of whatever it is that is being discussed.

Bad listeners often are quick to give advice, offer solutions, or diagnose. They jump to conclusions or try to show how perceptive they are by offering their analysis of what has been said and what they think should be done. If they are wrong in their assessment, or the person is not ready to accept what is offered, another cause of tension in a relationship can be introduced. A further danger is that dependency will be encouraged if we jump in with our bright ideas and suggestions since the individual will begin to look to us to provide the answers.

Of course, those of us who tend to be paternalistic or authoritarian probably will have spent more time developing our analytic and “telling” skills than our

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listening skills. One of the major causes of breakdown in marital and other important relationships is usually summed up by one of the persons saying, “You never listen” or “You always think you’re right.”

An everyday example of our tendency to tell rather than to ask involves the way parents often deal with their children’s report cards. Instead of first asking for our child’s reactions — after all, it is his report card — we let loose with a barrage of: “You don’t pay attention”; “You almost failed Math and Spelling”; “Next term see if you can’t raise your average from 80 to 85”; and so on. Our children are often left with the feeling we don’t understand them (no Empathy), are never satisfied (no Regard). And such Genuineness as there has been has usually been negative and demoralizing.

All of which is perhaps just another way of saying that good listeners know that, to get to know someone, it’s usually better to exercise our ears before our jaws.

But this isn’t meant to be a lecture on human relations. My intent has been to demystify human relations and to show that the essential human relations skills are available to anyone who appreciates their importance to human well-being. They can and are being taught and learned with notable success, when the instructor is competent.

And now to the most important piece of Good News that follows from the foregoing. Much of

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what causes us to fear for the present and future of our children, ourselves, and the Island does not have to be. We have it within our power and ability to reduce significantly the number of people who are at war with themselves and others. We can also improve the functioning and well-being of most of the rest of us who manage to get by with a good deal of our potential unexplored and underdeveloped.

Young people — our citizens of tomorrow, as they are so often described — do not have to be as messed up as far too many of them now are. There can be a significant and qualitative improvement in their behaviour and their well-being by improving the quality of the important adults in their lives. This will mean that, no matter what the years ahead hold in store, tomorrow's citizens will be better able to deal with it.

Nor will we need to find our meaning in colour or class. At present, too many of us seek reassurance in our position in society, possessions, or in religious or racial pride. They are shaky foundations for self-esteem and often are masquerades for the feelings of superiority (inferiority?) and supremacy on which South Africa is founded. But more on this in the last chapter.

Instead, we will gain our confidence from the only valid and enduring foundation for our self-esteem, namely, personal integrity, an appreciation of our strengths and limitations, and how we treat people.

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Such people are good for themselves and others. And, referring back to the chapter on the importance of reliable information in problem solving, they have the added advantage of usually being good problem-solvers who will, if the required information is not available, ask for or obtain it.

If we have the will, Bermuda can really qualify as “another world” — a world truly fit for humans. And the place to concentrate our energies is where most of our children spend most of their lives from a year and a half to 16: that is, day care centres, nursery schools, and primary and secondary schools.

## *Chapter 5*

### HOME AND SCHOOL

It doesn't require references to authorities on child development to convince most of us of the good or bad influence parents or teachers have on children. We all have our store of happy and painful memories to draw on, and, if we have a good supply of positive ones, we're probably managing pretty well. But if someone close to us has an oversupply of negative childhood memories with parents and teachers, the chances are there's a fair amount of conflict and pain in our lives.

Since we know how vital parents and teachers are in the lives of young people, why is it we do so little to assure that children's experiences with the most important adults in their lives are nurturing rather than undermining?

Some say people just don't care. After nearly forty years in health and welfare in four Canadian cities and Bermuda, I know this is just not true. This fact was really impressed on me when I worked with the parents of seriously disturbed boys and girls in the Children's Home of Winnipeg in the 1960s.

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Most of the children had been subjected to the most awful verbal and physical abuse. One mother had regularly put her infant in a gas oven to quiet him. Another had held her misbehaving child's hands on the element of an electric stove. Verbal abuse had included everything from expressions of loathing to claims the child was born evil or wasn't theirs. One vicious and destructive boy who came to the Home had an upper lip thickened with scar tissue from blows to the mouth.

When I first read this catalogue of abuse in the children's files, my commitment to trying to understand rather than to judge behaviour was driven out by disgust and loathing. Indeed, I wondered how I could be of any help to these so-called parents. But, as I came to be allowed entry — sometimes while they were in a drunken state — into their life experiences, and their hopes (few), and fears (many), I began to wonder what I would have done in similar circumstances if I had been deprived of so many of even the simplest of life's delights.

Though terribly wrong and misguided and fueled by a lifetime of their own hurts, many of the awful things these parents had done and said to their children were prompted by a desire for them to be good and well-behaved. As one father said, "I was as sure as hell that he had the Devil in him and I was gonna make certain I beat it out."

The fact that they did care became evident at



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the end of a meeting that the parents described as a “house cleaning”. One after the other, they had given the details of the horror they had inflicted on their children. When they had finished reciting the ways in which their anger and frustration had shown itself, I summed up what I’d heard by saying, “It seems like you all started out by loving your children and ended by hating them.”

This brought nods and tears from practically everyone in the room, including my own as I was engulfed by the flood of anguish.

As I rose to wind up the meeting one mother, since dead by suicide, held my arm and said, “I still do, you know.”

“You do, what?” I asked.

“I still love Timmy.” (Timmy had come to Children’s Home at the age of about six only able to make the sound of a vacuum cleaner.)

One after the other, most of the parents said with obvious conviction, “So do we.” I had no question that they meant it.

Yes, parents care, teachers care, we all care. I have no doubts at all about that. Why, then, do we often spend more time assuring the well-being of our pets than that of our children? Why will we intervene if we see a dog being roughly pulled and dragged and just lift our eyes to heaven when we see a crying and obviously tired two-year-old child receiving the same or worse treatment?

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Of course, one obvious reason is that most of us don't want to cause any trouble or bad feeling. This is probably especially true on a small island. We all have to live here.

I suppose there is sometimes an element of fear. There's no telling what abuse might be forthcoming if a parent's behaviour is questioned, especially in public.

But no matter what the reason for our reluctance, the fact is that existing legislation makes it easier to obtain a conviction for harsh discipline inflicted on an animal than on a child.

The reader probably will have concluded I am about to recommend an amendment to The Protection of Children Act. The Act should require that suspected cases of child abuse be reported by the health and legal professions and the general public, but I don't think legislation can achieve significant improvements in what goes on between parents and their children.

In the first place, with the centralization and abuse of authority that I have seen in places I never would have expected, I have become increasingly respectful of the belief that a man's home should be his castle, protected by law from outside intrusion, unless there is good reason to believe that some clearly defined danger requiring intervention exists. Current child protection legislation provides for this; but I do not know of any law in any country that has been successful in defining the real chal-

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lenge as far as child abuse is concerned, namely, emotional abuse.

Going uninvited into someone's home, even with the most helpful intentions, can also get a person's back up, especially when family relations are involved, as many a policeman has discovered. This is, unfortunately, most often true where help is most needed.

No, after having spent most of my working lifetime trying to do something about the problems of the dispossessed and disenchanting, I am convinced we must recognise that, in this day and age, teachers have replaced parents as the single most important influence for good or ill on the lives of children who come from homes lacking the growth vitamins of Empathy, Respect, and Genuineness. Assuming, of course, that the teachers have these skills.

I have already laid the foundation of why I think that teachers have more importance in the lives of children than do parents. Homes where the need is greatest are often those that most resist, resent, or are not aware that they need help. The result is that, when the cry in the night does come, many years have usually passed since the onset of trouble and it's often "too little too late".

But once we recognise the crucial importance of teachers, not only to the education, but to the growth and development of children, then we are on the threshold with the master key to the door to a considerably better tomorrow. We just have to

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make certain that the teachers benefit from the Good News of the previous chapter.

Utopian? There is no doubt in my mind that the proposals in the next two chapters are realistic and well within our means.

## *Chapter 6*

### HAPPINESS: TEACHERS WHO UNDERSTAND

Since this chapter contains reservations about the Education Department's Planning Team, I think I should begin with the following comments.

First, I want to make it clear that I believe that the Ministry is sincere in its desire to improve our schools. However, as I have said is true of many Government endeavours, the Ministry's major shortcoming is that its attempts to remedy problems often have not been sufficiently researched and thought through or have lacked the human and financial resources required for them to be successful. I believe that this is the major weakness of the Education Planning Team Final Report, especially the sections on teacher competence, evaluation, incentives, and training.

The Planning Team's Report was prepared by committees of interested citizens and local educators. I think it fair to say of those who considered matters related to teachers that some were knowledgeable, but no one was expert in the areas discussed. For example, I am aware of no committee

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member who has a proven track record of having trained effective teachers or who would be accepted as an authority on the best that is known about what makes a teacher effective.

The Report does say that research and experience elsewhere were considered. But it would have been far better to have had an expert consultant meeting with the committees to help sort the wheat from the chaff. The main pitfall of many committees is that, for fear of overlooking something, they will include much that is irrelevant or not fully documented, so that no clear direction or focus emerges. It is the difference between scatter shooting with a shotgun and sharpshooting with a rifle.

I know that we are very jumpy about outsiders being brought in, but there is no one I know of in Bermuda at this time who has the stature and competence to speak with authority on such matters as teacher effectiveness and evaluation. Although there is little that one can really argue with in the pages that deal with teachers, a qualified consultant would have helped to define exactly what would be required to turn hopes into realities. This would include the question of the availability of persons who are competent to train and evaluate teachers.

I do think that the fact that the committees represented members of the public and the teaching profession should have had positive results in terms of helping to boost morale in the Ministry, something I think at present is in short supply. The format was

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also probably adequate for some of the areas considered, but it certainly was lacking as far as the subject of teacher effectiveness was concerned.

Dr. Victoria Williams is one example of an expert on teacher effectiveness and training who would have been able to inform the committees about the research on these and related subjects. Dr. Williams is an educational psychologist who is a consultant with Carkhuff Associates, a Virginia-based firm which for over 20 years has specialised in the design, development, and delivery of staff training programmes for schools, business, and government.

Most of the information in the following digest of research on teacher effectiveness is to be found in Dr. Williams' Report to the Human Resource Development Department School Board of Broward County, Florida. The title of the report is "Synthesis of Research on Effective Teaching Practices."

In the Synthesis, Dr. Williams summarises research on factors that are assumed to relate to learning among low-achieving students. I stress "assumed" because the research on the following factors is far from conclusive:

Schools with strong principals; safe and orderly schools with high expectations; class size; students grouped according to ability; teaching styles; team learning; parent and community involvement; mastery of each unit studied before proceeding.

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As I have indicated, current research has not confirmed that these conditions will improve the performance of low-achieving students.

The same uncertainty exists concerning Dr. Williams' summary of what Maureen McCormick-Larkin reports are considered by most authorities to be "the ingredients of a successful school-effective-ness project."

Effective schools have a climate that communicates high expectations for student and teacher performance, a clear academic focus and an organization that fosters collegiality among teachers and principal; Curriculum; Instruction; Coordination of support services; Evaluation; Parent and community support.

Although most teachers would agree that these factors are important, the verdict is still out as far as the research is concerned.

Does this mean that education is in a take-your-pick stage as far as what is known about effective teachers is concerned?

Far from it. The best research we have confirms the Good News of Chapter 4, which is that effective teachers vary in teaching styles and strategies, but they share one characteristic. I have referred to it as human relations skills, and Dr. Williams and many others speak of interpersonal skills, but the beauty of this rose remains the same no matter what it is called.



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Dr. Williams reports that, in studies involving 700 teachers, 12,000 students, and 10,000 hours of rated classroom instruction, students of teachers with high interpersonal skills were found to have:

... missed fewer days of school; higher self-concept; greater achievement gains in Math and Reading; fewer discipline problems; committed less vandalism; increased IQ scores and creativity scores; and used higher cognitive levels of thought.

This should be Hallelujah news for any reader who can accept what has been said in this and the previous two chapters, namely, that human relations skills can be taught and learned and are required for effective teaching to take place. Once it is recognised that this is a statement that research and experience confirm has a very high probability of being correct, then one simple fact about education emerges: Effective teachers make for effective schools and effective teachers have high interpersonal skills. Or, to improve the schools, improve the teachers' interpersonal skills.

The importance of communication is recognised in the Planning Team's Report. But nowhere was I able to find reference to the research testifying to the central role of interpersonal skills in teacher effectiveness nor to the fact that such skills can be taught and are measurable.

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If we agree that we must begin with teachers, the challenge becomes the straightforward and manageable one of attracting, selecting, and retaining teachers who are effective.

As I hope was clear from the review of research in the opening pages of this chapter, we not only know what needs to go into the training of effective teachers, we can with considerable assurance identify those teachers who have not reached a minimally acceptable standard.

Support for the fact that we can determine which teachers need to have their skills improved, and the importance of doing so, is provided by Dr. Williams in her synthesis of research on effective teaching practices. She refers to studies (Aspy, Carkhuff, Berenson, and their associates) that confirm that interpersonal skills are “validly and reliably measurable.” Further, in “studies by 81 principal investigators covering 20 years” it was found that the mean interpersonal skill (IPS) level among principals, teachers, teacher education professors, and school counsellors who had not received IPS training was “about 2.0 on a 5.0 scale with 3.00 being minimally effective.”

But, on the hopeful side, the studies confirmed that “high levels of interpersonal skills can be trained in university courses and in-service education.” And, as noted earlier, the interpersonal skill level of teachers is the single best predictor of how students will do at school.

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All of which leads me to propose the following action plan, which I think is realistic and could transform those schools that need upgrading. Although up to five years would be required to achieve this goal, positive change would be apparent within the first year.

The First Recommendation is that a recognised authority on teacher effectiveness and the training of effective teachers be employed to develop a Teacher Effectiveness Assessment, Training, and Research Centre. The Director must have impeccable credentials and therefore, initially, will need to be a non-Bermudian on a three-year contract, followed by a two-year non-residential consultancy. Within six months of the Director's appointment, a Bermudian should be designated as an understudy.

It will be noted that I have included Research as one of the functions of the proposed Centre. I would see this assuming importance after the assessment and training components are in place and achieving measurable results. I am sure it would attract local as well as overseas scholars interested in undertaking studies on teacher effectiveness and related subjects.

The Second Recommendation is that the policy of the Ministry of Education should require that all first-time applicants for teaching positions (including head teachers and Ministry academic staff) be evaluated by the Assessment, Training, and Research Centre and should not be offered employ-

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ment unless they meet the minimum requirements established by the Centre. Candidates who are unsuccessful should be given the opportunity to upgrade their skills in a mutually agreed training programme. Under no circumstances should they be employed, even on probation.

Most applicants should be able to be assessed by the Centre in a day, with a second day for those who are borderline. Teachers would not have to come to Bermuda to be assessed since the Centre could employ qualified part-time assessors in the countries from which most overseas applications are received.

It will have been noted that applicants for head teachers' posts would be assessed. The effectiveness of a teacher can be adversely affected if the head teacher is lacking in interpersonal skills.

The Planning Team's Report offers no proposal designed to assure that teachers who are offered employment have the required interpersonal skills. As I have reported, a sizable number don't.

We don't let people drive cars only on the basis of written tests. They must also show that they have the necessary driving skills. Surely, teachers should be required to demonstrate that they have the skills required to be effective in and out of the classroom.

At the risk of being repetitious, I think it important to repeat that the emphasis and objective of interpersonal skills training must be on the acquisition of the specific skills being taught. Results of

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such training can only be reliably confirmed by demonstration in role-playing or, when possible, in real-life situations. Sensitivity training and other “group talk” seminars often produce insight, but this does not necessarily carry over into behaviour.

I found that it required a minimum of three years to go through all the procedures required to deal with an inadequate employee. Better for the teachers and children that teachers not be employed until they have qualified by a selection process more rigorous than the present interview procedure. Interviews are the least reliable method, even when glowing references have been provided. Past employers cannot always be trusted.

The Third Recommendation is that as soon as possible after the Assessment Centre is operating, the assessment of teachers who are already employed should commence. Those who fail to meet the minimum requirements should be informed that this deficiency must be corrected within a year if they wish their employment by the Ministry of Education to continue. Those who are not able to improve their skills within a year, or who decide not to remain with the Ministry, should receive a pension based on their salary at the time that they failed to meet the required standards.

To what I anticipate will be objections about the proposed pension, it is my opinion it is required by natural justice. After all, those affected prepared themselves for teaching and were employed and

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they should not be penalised for what they did in good faith.

To those worried about the cost, I doubt that many teachers would fail to reach the necessary standard once they had received the training that should have been present in the teacher training institution they attended. In any event, to spend countless millions on garbage disposal, hospitals, housing, prisons, highways, and an airport and get uptight about a million (probably much less) for teachers' pensions would have to qualify for the Shortsightedness Section of The Guinness Book of Records.

The Fourth Recommendation is that the Assessment Centre should ensure that teacher effectiveness training programmes are available locally and abroad by the time the assessment section of the Centre is operating. During the first three years, the training should be provided so that no teacher has to wait for longer than a month to begin. There should be no cost for the training. Financial provision should also be made for any non-academic expenses such as baby-sitting or taxis where it is shown that such expenditures are justified.

The Fifth Recommendation is that the Amalgamated Bermuda Union of Teachers (ABUT) should determine its position with regard to the following statement:

Teachers' salaries are woefully inadequate and are not competitive with Government and business positions of

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equal or less importance. Further, the in-school and out-of-school demands (homework, contact with parents, school sports, and other events) on teachers, as well as classroom pressures, more than counteract any advantage there may be in two months of holidays in the summer, which is only a month more than that received by senior civil servants, few of whom experience the pressures on and demands of a classroom teacher.

For the foregoing reasons, the beginning annual salary for any teacher with less than a Master's degree who has satisfactorily met the minimum standards of the Assessment, Training, and Research Centre should be no less than Public Service Step 28 which was \$39,825.00 as of November 1, 1988.

The annual beginning salary for a teacher with a Master's degree should be no less than Public Service Step 31, or \$44,472.00 as of November 1, 1988.

Classroom teachers' salary ranges should be expanded so they can achieve the equivalent of Public Service Step 45, \$76,991.00 while still classroom teachers.

I made the above recommendation concerning salaries in an address at Admiralty House and in an interview on Channel 7. Afterwards, many people stopped me in the street or contacted me to express their agreement. The Minister of Education in a television interview said that I should be aware from my years in the Civil Service that achieving such objectives was not as easy as people might think.

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of the nonsense that's going on in the civil service, I think I should relate what I did learn from my 16 years in the public service in Bermuda.

It has long since been recognised by the Departments of Management and Personnel Services that the current salary grading scheme was not designed for professional staff. It was imported from the United Kingdom and was intended for clerical and technical employees.

The grading system is especially unfair for some professional categories such as nurses, particularly those who do supervise other staff. For example, Government doctors would receive even less than the inadequate amount they do if the grading did not give an extra weighting for the nature of their work. However, this benefit is not given to nurses even though, in this day and age, nurses have major responsibilities for patient care and treatment. Unfortunately, the Grading Panel still labours under the antediluvian belief that nurses and bedpans are synonymous.

But the most important thing I learned about the grading system is that it is far from objective. I have everything short of written evidence that members of grading panels have refused to approve a grade for a position because they had been unable to receive approval for a similar grade for their staff who, they felt, held positions of equal importance. Or, as with nurses, they just do not know or refuse to accept the realities of the post being graded.



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Another possible reason for these inequities might be that grading panels often are entirely composed of males. Certainly, they seem to have difficulty regrading a salary upwards when a post is occupied by a female.

An impediment to impartiality also comes from the fact that the Department of Personnel Services is under obvious pressure from Government to hold the line on salaries. This dates from the time the grading system was introduced and resulted in a quite significant increase in Government salaries. Thereafter, Government began to receive negative reactions from the public about Government expenditure. The powers that be are particularly sensitive about this because it appears to raise the ire of all Bermudians, irrespective of party affiliation.

But, when all is said and done, the fact is that the grading system is the main culprit. However, it is not Holy Writ. It was made by man and can be changed by him in those areas in which it is unfair. Any other argument is just a red herring. Government and the Opposition have shown that, when the public demands that they jump, their main question is “how high?”

The issue, then, is whether the ABUT agrees that pay scales are about half what the importance and demands of teaching and market competition require if the best and brightest are to be attracted. If the Union can accept this, and if the proposed

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salaries are considered appropriate, it will make the recommended salaries the main plank in its next negotiations with Government. Further, the Union will make it clear that failure to accept its proposals will be followed by withdrawal of service.

Admittedly, I am proposing that the Union be inflexible, but I am convinced that, in this day and age, it is virtually impossible to obtain and maintain quality in any field unless the financial inducements are attractive and competitive. Whether we like it or not, one tends to get what one pays for.

With teachers' salaries at their current levels, small wonder that the Ministry, unlike all other Government departments, does not include any mention of salaries when teachers' jobs are advertised. Small wonder the lack of achievement of so many students in Maths and Science is cause for concern. What Bermudians with these talents are going to choose teaching when the professional and business world are crying for such individuals and are offering inducements to make it worthwhile?

The Sixth Recommendation is that the section of the Education Planning Team's Report on teacher incentives be referred to the Assessment, Training, and Research Centre. I think that the idea of rewarding competent teachers will be popular with Ministry Headquarters staff and politicians because it is a far less costly alternative to paying teachers what they are worth.

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The temptation to proceed should be resisted. I believe it is the weakest and least documented section of the Report. As the Team responsible for the proposals concerning incentive awards seems itself to recognise, it is standing on pretty shaky and uncharted ground. It admits:

Research in the U. S. indicates that incentive schemes have failed because of the problems with evaluation (of) administration and staff. It is not easy to determine who deserves the extra pay because of a lack of objective criteria. ... It has been impossible ... to make this scheme perfect. The elements of favouritism and subjectivity will remain.

One would think that such uncertainty about the results of the introduction of teacher incentive schemes would have prevented Team No. 6 from making such a recommendation until the outstanding questions and reservations had been resolved. But even more important is the unanswered question, what is the evidence that such incentive programmes have played a significant part in improving the effectiveness of teachers whose interpersonal skills are not up to par?

The next recommendation recognises that, by two years of age, 75 to 80 per cent of children spend most of their waking lives in the care of someone other than their parents. Many people express upset over this. I think it is a reality that has

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to be accepted, now that two incomes are required to keep almost any family afloat. Also, the evidence is that quality day care is good for children. And research shows that the quality of day care depends on the quality of the staff. This makes it possible to ensure our children nurturing experiences with adults from at least age two until 16. As a result, even the most needy and deprived children will spend the major portion of their growing years with caring adults and good role models.

Therein lies the basis of the hope for tomorrow.

Therefore, the Seventh Recommendation is that the Day Care Standards being considered by the Ministries of Education and Health, Social Services, and Housing require that only staff be employed by day care centres and nursery schools who have been assessed and approved by the proposed Assessment, Training, and Research Centre. Already employed staff would be offered the same options proposed for teachers. No longer should it be possible, as it is now, for a private nursery to advertise for a teacher with no mention of the educational or other qualifications required.

I think it will be appreciated that the foregoing recommendation will require the involvement of the Ministry of Health and Social Services. The fact that it licenses day care centres and nursery schools and also is responsible for the Child Development Centre are but two obvious reasons for collaboration.

*Happiness: Teachers Who Understand*

I consider the last recommendation — the Eighth — to be the most important. I believe that the response it receives will determine whether schools become hospitable to learning and the well-being of those who spend most of the first 16 years of their lives in them. Because so much depends on the reaction to Recommendation 8, I have devoted the next chapter to it.

## *Chapter 7*

### PARENT POWER

I think that this chapter on Recommendation 8 should be introduced with the following observations.

I have proposed that the Amalgamated Bermuda Union of Teachers initiate action to upgrade teachers' salaries. However, I am convinced that the future of our schools depends on the extent to which parents become knowledgeable about what is required and press for change. Certainly, I have no confidence that Government is up to the challenge.

My reservation concerning leaving it to Government is based on my experience that, nowadays, Government tends to bend whichever way the public wind is blowing. This is especially true in matters pertaining to Health, Education, Recreation, and Welfare since they require large expenditures for staff if they are to be effective. As noted earlier, in the public's mind, Government salaries are the cause of most of the Island's ills. Consequently, the civil servant has replaced the black Bermudian as

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the convenient scapegoat for whatever the problem of the day is.

It may be that the desire to remain in power is so strong that Government won't risk losing votes on programmes that may be controversial or may involve fairly large expenditures (for example, on teachers' salaries). Whatever the reason, my years with Government convinced me it had a great deal of difficulty withstanding proposals from pressure groups. It also was impatient with any idea that required more than an Old Testament understanding of human behaviour, but it could get very excited about the latest quick-fix remedy from the Reader's Digest or other organ of similar authority.

Of course, it is to be hoped the Ministry of Education will rise to the occasion, but I just don't think the atmosphere in the Ministry is conducive to the coordination and concentration of effort that will be needed. The Ministry appears to be far more at ease with paternalism and authoritarianism and uncomfortable with those who question or challenge. It does not seem to be any more at home with democratic give and take than most of us Bermudians are. The Ministry gives the impression of being afraid that a breath of freedom in school will result in all hell breaking out — as I gather happened in one or two schools when it was last tried — so that most of our schools are places where the main skills required are remembering and not arguing. Passing exams is what it's all about.

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But even without such impediments to effective problem-solving, the Ministry of Education faces a major challenge from three sources: Government, teachers, and parents of schoolchildren.

I have already dealt with Government. I noted the Minister of Education's response to my recommendation concerning teachers' salaries. If he and Government really accepted that the salaries are inadequate, they would see that something was done about them, as they have about their own salaries. At present, they are hiding their true feelings behind the smokescreen of the grading system. They know it and I know it.

It is to be hoped that teachers will wholeheartedly support the proposal that their salaries be significantly increased. But I am afraid that some will react negatively to the recommendations concerning teacher effectiveness because they will be threatened by them.

Of course, it would be difficult to find a teacher who would not agree with the need for effective teachers, but there are far fewer loopholes in the proposals in these pages than there are in the *Education Planning Team Final Report*. The Report says nothing about how to make certain that only competent teachers are employed. Also, the procedure for evaluating teachers is too dependent on the opinions of the evaluators who, apparently, will differ from school to school.

The proposal concerning a Teacher Assessment,



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Training, and Research Centre provides for greater uniformity and objectivity since it would be directed and staffed by specialists in the area of teacher effectiveness. Human relations or interpersonal skills would, for example, be tested and measured. I think this may threaten some teachers.

Certainly, my experience in teaching human relations skills to social work students at Dalhousie University indicated that many students were alarmed by the thought that human relations skills can be measured. Almost invariably, those who discussed their anxieties with me were afraid that they would not measure up, and some feared that they not only lacked but could not acquire the required skills. And it was not until they began to see their skills improving that they could accept assurances that interpersonal skills could be learned by anyone who had the necessary motivation.

However, I hope that teachers, through the ABUT, will fully support recommendations to assure and improve teacher effectiveness. But, irrespective of how Government, the Ministry, and teachers respond, I am convinced that the future of our schools depends on the extent to which parents, especially through Home and School and Parent-Teacher organizations, become informed about what is required and press for change. As I have suggested, parents, potentially, carry a lot of weight at the ballot box. If Government has to choose between offending teachers or parents, it is the teachers who will suffer.

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I also believe that what goes on in our schools should reflect the efforts and desires of the citizens of a country, especially the parents.

Many educators are uncomfortable with such parental involvement in the education of children. It is all right for parents to support the efforts of teachers by providing proper discipline for their children and making sure that they do their homework, but leave what is taught, how it is taught, and by whom it is taught to the teaching profession. They know best, we're assured.

The United States is often given as an example of the negative consequences of citizens being asked to vote on increases in taxes for education. And, of course, there can be no question that the right of citizens to make decisions about the education of children can be for good or ill, but it is also one of the strengths of democracy that it provides an opportunity to become informed about issues and to learn from mistakes. Surely, the present decision-makers have learned from bitter experience that they are far from infallible.

On the basis of the foregoing, Recommendation 8 proposes that, as a matter of urgency, a meeting of the Island's Home and Schools be held to consider the appointment of a special committee that is representative of PTAs to:

- a. Employ an independent, qualified consultant to assist the Associations in reviewing proposals in the *Planning*

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*Team Final Report* and in these pages related to teacher effectiveness, including financial incentives for teachers;

b. Discuss its findings with representatives of the Ministry of Education and obtain assurance that any action taken by the Ministry will be preceded by consultation with and will not be hostile to the findings of the Committee.

I know that this is a tall order and that, at present, PTAs are largely occupied with raising funds for movie projectors, books, and swimming pools. In my opinion, if such projects are considered important, they should be provided for with public funds. When PTAs are not raising funds, they are frantically looking for interesting speakers or events that they hope will attract more people to the next meeting.

At the risk of offending those who are active in PTAs, I think it's about time they devoted at least some of their energies to making sure that children spend their days in an environment that nurtures their humanity and sense of personal worth as well as their ability to read, write, and compute.

There is no reason to believe that PTAs will attract more than a handful of dedicated souls in each school. Those who become involved are there because they care about their children. They can help to make schools what they should be if they become knowledgeable about the best that is

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known about effective schools and are less dependent on professional educators who, the record shows, can enthusiastically take us down some blind alleys that are expensive in both financial and human terms.

There is nothing in Education or, for that matter, in Health or Welfare that cannot be made understandable to the layman, and, if it cannot, it should be suspect. Professional jargon can be a convenient cover for an idea that has not received rigorous scrutiny and confirmation by anything more than personal opinion.

Yes, Parent Power can be a potent positive force for change in schools. However, it is essential that it be based on sound knowledge if it is not to compound whatever problem is being addressed.

As I said in an earlier chapter, one of the many positive developments in Bermuda is the number of groups that support various causes and interests. But, unfortunately, most of the proposals fervently pressed on Government are unsupported by anything more than anxiety and fear and a superficial understanding of the problems that are the cause of concern. We have more than enough of such groups that cannot see beyond the confines of their narrow, vested interests or that lack the information required to advance more informed positions.

Those concerned about the physical environment are, in my opinion, exceptions. Increasingly, their proposals show evidence of being well-researched

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and, when necessary, the advice of overseas consultants has been obtained. As a result, they can hold their heads up and not be intimidated by civil servants or Ministers who have something to hide or who haven't done their homework. However, I regret that they haven't also directed their energies to the quality of the human environment, especially in our schools. A spic and span house and ample yard is only meaningful if its owners are also in good shape. There is a direct and dependent relationship between the quality of the physical environment and the quality of the people who live in it. Messed up people will foul their surroundings.

In any event, congratulations to the environmentalists for the way in which they pursue their goals. But when it comes to such upsetting problems as drugs, crime, and our worries about school, we tend to shoot from the hip with whatever we find there. More often than not, it fails to hit the mark because we attack the symptoms without ever really understanding the causes of the problem.

Therefore, if parents and other concerned members of the community do take up the challenge and are not to continue as colonial appendages of the education system and, therefore, a part of the problem, they must be able to hold their heads up in any company as far as their knowledge about effective teachers and schools is concerned. Not only will this ensure that efforts to improve the lives of children in school will be soundly based, but it will remove

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any doubts that may exist when programmes are identified, as they will be, that seem to require more than the penny-pinching found in many of the proposals of *The Education Planning Team Final Report*.

I am convinced that a commitment to act on the eight recommendations in this and the previous chapter offers the most economic and effective way of significantly improving the quality of the lives of Bermudians, especially those who enter adulthood damaged by their experiences in school as well as at home. Such Bermudians were described in a recent letter to *The Royal Gazette* as “... an underclass of angry young men who ... feel they have no stake or interest in the progress or future of their country.”

Such outcasts and dropouts don't seem to be getting any fewer. This Island is too small to cope with too many people who fall by the wayside. If we don't watch out, we could all go down the drain together — except, of course, those who have had the means to prepare alternative nests for themselves overseas.

Note Just before *Shackles of the Past* went to the printers, *The Mid-Ocean News* reported on a weekend training programme for senior administrative staff of the Ministry of Education. It was too late to include any comment in this or previous chapters, but my observations will be found in the Appendix (page 134).

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## *Chapter 8*

### STRAIGHT TALK

I begin this last chapter with a warning and a hope. The warning is that I will not be beating about the bush. This will be straight talk about some of the behaviour of many of us otherwise decent black and white Bermudians. It is divisive and destructive and the most challenging shackle from the past that confronts us. Yet, at the same time, it is one we can do something about if we recognise that it is seriously interfering with our ability to deal with our social and other ills.

I will be ignoring the fact that white and black Bermudians have had many experiences that they believe justify the negative attitudes and suspicious and wary feelings they have about each other. I also know that some of us have been so damaged by the time we have spent in the world that we have become a part of the problem and have to be handled with kid gloves. And there are those of us who get uptight when confronted by an opinion that doesn't agree with our cherished convictions about what makes the world go around.



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My hope is that you will hear me out. If you are black, please don't pull a number on me by accusing me of being insensitive and of not knowing what it's like to be a black Bermudian. And, if you are white, don't shut me out by accusing me of over-identifying with black Bermudians.

Too many of us black and white Bermudians who share a concern about harmful conditions in Bermuda are wasting too much energy being suspicious of each other's intentions. If ever there was a time to rise above defensive reactions and real or imagined grievances, it is now. Surely, we have only to look around us to see that our country is in serious trouble and needs the best that we can give.

Here, then, are examples of some of the ways we are our own worst enemies.

Recently a white status Bermudian who has lived most of his life here caught hell from many black Bermudians for his reply to a question following his address as a member of a panel discussion sponsored by the Race Relations Council. He said that, since the only original Bermudians were crickets and cedar trees, we should put aside our differences and work together to solve the problems that face us.

The indignant reactions included threats of violence and demands that his status be revoked and that he be sent packing to the United States where he was born.

I wrote to *The Royal Gazette* to defend the

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right to his opinions and to deplore the threats that his off-the-cuff remark precipitated. A few days after my letter appeared, a black Bermudian, who in the past has shown a regard for my opinions, phoned me. He said he agreed with my support of a person's right to freedom of speech. However, he thought that the comments had released the feelings that black Bermudians have about status being given to white Bermudians to keep the United Bermuda Party in power. He said that there was also resentment about jobs being given to status Bermudians and non-Bermudians (usually white) when qualified born Bermudians (usually black) were available. He added that another cause of bad feeling was the rents inflated by the salaries and housing allowances given to foreign employees.

I suggested that one more reason might be that black Bermudians are only too aware of references to them as animals to take kindly to a white man suggesting that the only true Bermudians were lizards. He agreed that this was a possible further aggravation.

Although I heard of no white Bermudians being offended by the individual's remarks, several who have spoken to me agreed with a Letter to the Editor deploring what the letter writer saw as his lack of sensitivity.

I have no difficulty in accepting that the response of those black Bermudians who were upset was

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understandable. However, it was a reaction that would be seen as immature and defensive if it occurred in interactions in which colour was not involved. But many black leaders joined in fanning the flames of resentment. And none said what obviously needed saying:

This man is just telling us Bermudians that we've all got to work together to do something about our problems. So he didn't have to talk about cedar trees and crickets, but he's a white man with a record of trying to improve black and white relations long before he was granted status; and there are white Bermudians who still won't forgive him for it.

Nor did I hear any white leaders rise to the occasion. Their comments (out of the hearing of black Bermudians, of course) were expressions of the view still held by many white Bermudians that such a childish response was proof of how immature and volatile they (black Bermudians) are — obviously, not ready to assume the reins of power. Colonialism, again, and probably racism.

I now turn to a recent conversation with a white Bermudian friend of mine. We were discussing race relations. His name is not Frank, but he is a real person.

“Frank, you know damn well what's wrong with race relations in Bermuda.”

“If you're so smart, what's wrong?”

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“They’re polite and phony, especially when there are strong feelings involved.”

Frank began to give examples of black Bermudians with whom he felt he was friendly. I reminded him of the number of times he had expressed his irritation about black Bermudians who blame all their problems on white Bermudians.

He asked what that had to do with it.

“Have you ever told a black Bermudian how much that bothers you and how wrong you think it is? Come on now, be honest.”

“Do you think I’m crazy?”

“Why haven’t you?”

I didn’t give him time to reply.

“Because you’re afraid they’ll think you’re prejudiced, right?”

He agreed that this was true.

“Well, that’s what I call dishonest and phony.”

“OK, but don’t most friendships begin with small talk? Then, when you find it’s someone you really feel comfortable with, you can go on from there. But how can anything develop if the other guy starts by not trusting you or blaming you for his problems?”

“You’re saying that, if the relationship starts with suspicion, it’s not liable to go anywhere?”

“How the hell can it?”

“And you think that prevents some white Bermudians from really feeling comfortable with and getting to know black Bermudians?”

“Not just some. I think it’s true of a lot of us.”

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He went on. "You take the PLP. I like some of the things they stand for, but there's no way I would vote for them because I know they're anti-white and they'd take it out on us if they ever got into power."

"You mean you think they would."

"Think they would! Don't give me that 'think' crap. I've been to their meetings. All they ever talk about is black and white. I know damn well they would. It makes me feel as though I don't have a right to be here."

"What about the NLP?"

"As a matter of fact, I'm pretty close to voting for them now."

"How come? Their leader is a black Bermudian."

"I don't think he's got a racial hangup."

When I returned to Bermuda in 1972, I would have seen Frank's words as just another typical cover for prejudice. I no longer feel that way. I have too often heard the same thoughts expressed by too many other white Bermudians and I have had my own experiences with black Bermudians who call on colour to explain any incident not to their liking.

When I worked for the Ministry of Health and Social Services, I was confronted several times a year by unsuccessful applicants for positions who attributed their failure to prejudice. In every instance, I found the decision was based on credentials, not colour. Indeed, at least in the Ministry of Health and Social Services, in the interests of Bermudianisation, many black as well as white

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Bermudians were recommended for and appointed to positions for which they lacked the necessary experience and for which there were highly qualified foreign applicants. Yet, two or three times a year, it didn't prevent some Bermudian from indignantly storming into my office alleging prejudice. After a few years of this, I developed the theory that those who protested the most were the most unqualified.

Of course, prejudice is still alive and well and sometimes shown in ways white people are unaware of, but I've been forced to recognise that my own suspicions of white Bermudians have prevented me from seeing that many really want relationships to improve. Unfortunately, very few white Bermudians have had the kind of free and easy experiences with black Bermudians that would encourage the frankness that is required, and many are afraid they'll be seen as racist if they really say what they're thinking.

Another tragic consequence of this inhibition is that it often reinforces whatever mutual prejudices and suspicions already exist. Marital counsellors will confirm that many marriages flounder because the couples keep their real feelings to themselves. Some of the most successful therapy is based on teaching husbands and wives how to tell their partners "like it is" in a constructive way. Without such help, divorce or a return to misery on the part of one or both spouses usually results.

As with family relations, so, too, race relations. Of course, it doesn't help that those white and

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black Bermudians who are unable to see beyond colour seem to be threatened by any sign that things might be improving. The response of such black Bermudians is summed up by variations on the warning, “You can’t trust them”, and accusations of “Uncle Tom” against black Bermudians who seem to be too cosy with whites.

Their opposite white numbers appear to delight in examples of black Bermudians who don’t measure up in their behaviour, workplace attitudes, or skills. Of course, this is just another way of reassuring oneself that black people are inferior. It’s as though such black and white Bermudians — often so-called leaders — are afraid of losing an ideology and career based on the belief that black and white must be forever twain.

But motives or intent are not important. My concern is that so few white and black Bermudians seem able to have the kind of dialogue with each other that is desperately needed if we are to get beyond viewing each other as the problem.

In this respect, I see little progress since my departure from Bermuda in 1953 although, unlike then, I think that many white Bermudians would like it to be otherwise, even if only because they know that our survival as a place worth living in depends on finding an alternative to suspicion and closed doors.

I now come to a subject I am hesitant to introduce because there’s a good chance it will alienate some,

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perhaps many, readers. Also, I think there will be those who feel that a white person hasn't earned the right to say what I will be saying. Although I have spoken with black Bermudians who agree with me and believe it needs to be said, they have made it clear that the mood in Bermuda is such that they are sure they would be ostracized if they were to express the opinions that follow.

In any event, I said this would be a chapter of straight talk, so damn the torpedoes! Here goes.

In Chapter 4, I discussed the importance of self-concept or self-esteem and its relationship to an individual's behaviour. Essentially, I said that the best information we have confirms that people who have realistic self-images are good for themselves and other people. It is important to note that self-image needs to be realistic, because it has been found that some very mixed-up people who are self-assured show themselves as unable to recognise or admit any limitations. They have a high rating for defensiveness on a self-concept test.

There is also much to support the belief that problems are often found in people whose self-esteem is based on possessions or on factors which are fleeting or over which they have little control. Indeed, often their self-esteem is low. It's as though they realise that such things as a car or other possessions, good looks, intelligence, or skill in sports can always be bettered by someone else or will diminish with each passing year.



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In my career as a social worker, I have known many such people. Almost invariably, they were worried (in some instances, terrified) that the only reason people were interested in them was because of their possessions or their talents. The frightening question they lived with was: “If I weren’t pretty (smart, wealthy, agreeable, an outstanding athlete), would they still be interested in me?” And this uncertainty usually extended to the fear that their parents only loved them because of some such attribute and wouldn’t care for them “if they really knew me.” This will not come as a surprise to many of us who are parents, since most of us have heard the accusation “You only love me because ...”

Of course, I am talking about what Dr. Carl Rogers would describe as conditional love or respect. When it is present, it can result in those who experience it living on a razor’s edge of uncertainty and doing some ultimately self-defeating things to remain in the good graces of others. Sometimes, of course, they react by resorting to anti-social behaviour, almost as though trying to prove that their acceptance is conditional on their living up to the expectations of others. This was often true of disturbed children I worked with over the years.

I am sure that most readers would agree that a self-concept founded on a belief in white supremacy is founded on pretty shaky ground because it immediately brings to mind the Ku Klux Klan and South Africa. But are not the Ku Klux Klan and South Africa just extreme

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expressions of the belief that there is something special about one's colour? Is it not white pride? As such, it not only contradicts what we know about mankind, but it is a poor basis for a self-concept since it is so easily proven to be wrong by one's daily experiences, which indicate that ignorance and intelligence do not respect colour lines.

It may not be too difficult, for example, to feel superior to black people who have been raised as servants and workhorses and denied anything but the most elementary education. But anyone living in Bermuda who thinks that way has obviously been blinded by prejudice or has been in contact with a very narrow range of black Bermudians.

But what about self-esteem founded on black pride or "black is beautiful".

I suggest that — in spite of the centuries that blacks were regarded and treated as inferior, in spite of the daily television and movie and printed proclamations that white (blonde) is best, in spite of the fact that far more give and take are still expected of black Bermudians than white, yes, in spite of it all — black pride is a no more reliable basis for one's feelings about oneself than is white pride or, for that matter, religious pride.

My experiences with people of all backgrounds, colours, and faiths, and every reputable book I have ever read confirm that the only enduring and life-affirming foundation for self-esteem is based on an

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appreciation and acceptance of our strengths and limitations; a concern for and sensitivity to the well-being of others, and a recognition of our common humanity, irrespective of creed, class, or colour.

Having said this, I want to make it clear that I'm not comparing black pride with the mouthings of white supremacists. Also, I have no question that it was necessary and has served a useful purpose. Something was needed to counteract and challenge the mantle of the Divine Right of Whites that we humans with white skin assumed from birth was ours. And I have no doubt that the emphasis on black accomplishments and culture has helped to develop confidence and a sense of solidarity and, yes, rightful pride, in many for whom such feelings were unfamiliar. And, certainly, there is a qualitative difference between celebrating and remembering the black author and early champion of civil rights, W.E.B. Du Bois, and the Klan's adulation of Adolph Hitler.

But I think that the heavy emphasis on black pride and achievements is becoming a hindrance. I also believe it is now out of step with present challenges and realities. Further, it is my impression that black pride is more meaningful to the older generation of black Bermudians, as indicated by the concern expressed from time to time that black young people are forgetting their heritage and have joined white Bermudians in their commitment to

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negative implications there may be, perhaps it is also true that it's a positive reflection of the fact that young black Bermudians are developing more self-confidence and don't need to seek reassurance in colour or the history or accomplishments of others.

I see some hopeful signs that it is being recognised that any social organization, political or otherwise, that is perceived as having a programme or membership based on colour is going to be handicapped in Bermuda. Thus, I was encouraged that, following the February 1989 election, a newly elected young member of the Progressive Labour Party publicly referred to the need for the Party to be seen to be hospitable to and sensitive to the problems of white Bermudians.

I would suggest a constructive step toward the realization of this objective would be to locate a few white Bermudians who would be willing to attend Party and Union meetings for a few months and would give honest feedback on how comfortable they felt as white people. I make this suggestion because, on the basis of media reports — which is how most white Bermudians form their impressions of the Progressive Labour Party and the Bermuda Industrial Union — the Party and the Union focus on past and present injustices based on colour to the same extent that the United Bermuda Party appears to wish to ignore the fact that, in some areas, prejudice in Bermuda is very much with us.

A recent experience provides an example of the

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challenge facing not only black, but also white Bermudians.

Just before the February election, I was a member of a panel speaking to an audience of approximately 100 people. Excluding myself, about four or five of those present were white (at least three of whom were not born Bermudians). I felt that there was considerable sympathy with much of what I had to say, with the exception of my comments that questioned black pride as a rallying point for black Bermudians.

Although several black Bermudians spoke to me during the coffee break and agreed with what I had said, a fellow panelist, as well as members of the audience, said that black people had been expected to do all of the accommodating and they weren't prepared to do it any more. White people would just have to learn to get used to it because the shoe was now on the other foot.

There is no question in my mind that black Bermudians have more than gone the second mile by accepting an outstretched hand when it was offered, whether from service clubs, churches, or other areas where the doors were closed or open according to skin colour. It required trust, forgiveness, and, often, putting up with well-meaning paternalism. Many black Bermudians have been criticised and even scorned for being so naive as to trust "honkies" or to compromise themselves for a piece of the action. I fervently hope that these same black Bermudians,

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as well as others, will recognise that the time for polarization on the basis of colour has gone. Not too long ago, the major challenges in Bermuda were unquestionably related to segregation and discrimination, and it was a rare white Bermudian who even questioned the way it was, much less thought it should be otherwise.

This is no longer true. We are now threatened by problems that do not respect Jim Crow and that will swamp us if black and white Bermudians are not able to rise above division on the basis of colour. It would make little difference if every white person were to leave Bermuda tomorrow. The same challenge would remain: the challenge of how best and most equitably to distribute the economic pie; and the challenge of crime, mental illness, drugs, and other evidence of personal and social breakdown.

We just can't afford to be divided and deterred by those who insist on getting their "licks" in for the sins of the past.

Of course, the challenge to the white residents of this Island is massive. So many of us don't seem to be able to get beyond throwing up our hands and lifting our eyes to heaven and asking, "What do they want now?"

I have no trouble in accepting that black Bermudians are right when they say it has been a one-way street and the impetus for change has come from them. White Bermudians, with a few notable exceptions, have gotten by on Sir Henry Tucker's

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coattails and have basked in his reflected glory. They have gone along with integration reluctantly and with little conviction, and the extent of their commitment seldom has gone beyond being polite. However, I should say here that when I expressed this opinion to a white Bermudian, he was very indignant. With considerable feeling, he said, if anything it was the other way around. White Bermudians had more than done their part. In support of this, he said it was his and the belief of many white people that, in contrast to the old days, people are being appointed to positions because they are black. “Anyway,” he concluded, “there’s just too damn much talk of colour.”

Of course, for the purpose of what I’m saying in this chapter, whether the greater effort is being made by black or white is not important. It is just another example of one of the many honestly held (but unproven and irrelevant) beliefs that divide us. It calls to mind the childhood argument, “I did more than you did.” The therapist Dr. Albert Ellis refers to it as ABC thinking, with A being an event or situation, B what we tell ourselves about it, and C our feelings or opinions. Ellis suggests that much of what we tell ourselves (B) is negative or faulty and a cause of many of our difficulties. Thus, when we’re sitting hot and tired on a bus after a hard day’s work, someone steps on our foot. That’s A. We start mumbling to ourselves what a clumsy idiot he is. That’s B, what we tell ourselves. We look

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admonish him to watch where he's putting his feet — C. Then we see the white cane he is holding and we jump up to offer our seat, thinking, "Poor soul, why didn't someone help him? Anybody could see he is blind."

Same person and same situation (A), but different message to ourselves (B), with the result that anger (C) is replaced by sympathy and concern (a new C). One reaction brings out irritation, the other evokes sympathy and concern.

But to continue with examples of "us and them" thinking.

White Bermudians complain about how few black Bermudians are to be seen at the Bermuda Festival. Yet white Bermudians are seldom present at events attended by black Bermudians.

A recent example of black and white Bermudians going their separate ways was Mosaic IV. It was held at St. Paul's A. M. E. Church at the end of February, 1989 and was one of the events of Black History Month. It was advertised as an affair that would not make people feel uncomfortable. Obviously, the sponsors had in mind white people and were trying to assure them it would not be an evening of white bashing.

The church was filled with an appreciative audience that was composed mainly of middle aged and older black men and women and no more than half a dozen white people, some of whom were there officially.



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Mosaic IV recounted and celebrated accomplishments and humorous and sad experiences of black Bermudians from the 1600s to the 1960s. As such, it was obviously an evening, as was Black History Month, designed to encourage black pride. It was also, in my opinion and contrary to the assurances of the sponsors, not exactly a comfortable experience. Although it was presented without anger, the incidents involving hurt and pain were the result of the laws and actions of white people. This almost certainly rouses feelings of guilt and regret in any sensitive white person, accompanied, perhaps, by a touch of irritation if one has been overexposed to similar recitals of injustice in the past.

I have also been told by white Bermudians who have attended such events that they wonder if they are welcome. Although I have never been received with anything but kindness, I confess to having the same anxieties.

However, staying away is not the answer and it encourages the belief that white people really don't care or have no interest in learning about the black experience. And so we continue to have white and black cocoons in a society that is officially integrated, but segregated in practice.

Notwithstanding my reservations about the validity of black pride as an appropriate foundation for self-esteem, I suspect it will be with us for some time to come. Therefore, we white people must make more effort than we are to understand its

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meaning for black Bermudians and to support and encourage events sponsored by groups whose membership is largely black. I'm not talking about presentations where there seems to be an almost sadistic delight in having a go at whitey and there is little evidence of talent. But Mosaic IV definitely did not fit that classification.

The annual Berkeley School Fair is an event that makes many black Bermudians feel that integration is a one-way street. Few white people attend, thereby reducing its effectiveness as a fund raiser. Yet black families account for much of the success of the Mount Saint Agnes Fair.

The virtual absence of white Bermudians at Cup Match is seen by many black Bermudians as another example of white flight. Since white Bermudians were well represented at Cup Match when I attended as a young person, I suspect other reasons may be responsible. I found it had lost its attraction for me when I returned to Bermuda in 1972 because the sound of the boom boxes prevented me from hearing the bat hitting the ball, appeals for LBW, advice, jokes, and insults from spectators to players, and the occasional profanity that was much enjoyed by all.

Of course, a less comforting explanation is that the absence of white people (except for tourists) is a reflection of the underground of suspicion and ill feeling that exists between black and white. However, black as well as white Bermudians have used

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similar reasons as mine to explain their dropping of Cup Match from their annual “must see” list. But if this does at least partially explain the fall-off in white attendance, it is but another example of our tendency to polarize life in terms of black and white. It is also an illustration of the lack of honest dialogue between black and white Bermudians. We reach our conclusions about each other without first checking them out. It’s that ABC thinking at work again.

The effort must be made if we hope to bridge the considerable gap that divides black and white. I also think that the decency and affection and sense of community we will find will confirm that black Bermudians have much of which to be proud.

At first, our efforts to approach, instead of withdraw, may seem forced and unnatural. But we wouldn’t learn to drive a car, walk, or do much else if we were not prepared to suffer some discomfort. And, if we keep at it, what at first seemed awkward and unnatural eventually will become second nature as we develop what they refer to in golf as a “grooved swing.”

Certainly, the biggest impact for me of an evening like Mosaic IV came from looking at the faces in the audience. It made me feel good about my fellow man and reminded me that history proves decency seems to survive in human beings in spite of the occasions when, because of the false idols of colour, class, or belief, man’s inhumanity to man gets the

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upper hand, whether the villain is a white supremacist or an Idi Amin.

Of course, the challenge to white Bermudians in particular is enormous. The white flight out of sports and to private schools in Bermuda and abroad makes it very difficult (even for black Bermudians whose lives are not devoted to grinding historic axes) to trust the intentions of white people. And though I suspect what has happened in most sports and in education has as much to do with income and class as it does with colour, it still represents a further unfortunate separation of Bermudians into black and white enclaves and makes black people hesitant about accepting appeals for unity from white people. It's hard to forget yesteryear when so much of it still seems to be with us in our segregated (in effect) schools and community activities.

A recent illustration of what I saw as a failed opportunity for white Bermudians to cross the colour line occurred during the business section of a meeting of a service club at which I was the guest speaker. It involved an invitation from St. Paul's A. M. E. Church to have a stall at a forthcoming event. This was dealt with by the chairman, who was white, saying that there wasn't time to prepare a stall. The club then moved on to the next item of business, which happened to be the induction of a black member.

I was convinced by the look on at least one black

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Member's face that he would have liked to have had an opportunity to discuss the invitation from St. Paul's. Although I didn't have a chance to confirm this with the individual concerned, after the meeting I did speak with one black member who said he had hoped the club would participate.

I have had many experiences since returning to Bermuda of black Bermudians withholding their feelings and opinions in similar situations because they have been told it is not polite to argue, especially with white people. The Eleventh Commandment for many black Bermudians over 40 has been: "Shut your mouth and get an education if you want to amount to something." Too many of us white Bermudians whose intentions are good are not sufficiently sensitive to this fact. Roger's Rules of Order aren't always appropriate if you want to know what your members really think.

I believe that service clubs have a positive role to play in today's Bermuda. I have not always had these positive feelings about the contribution service clubs can make to better human relations and, therefore, to a Bermuda that is better able to deal with whither the fates take us. However, now that they are open to all — including, increasingly, to women — and are showing a real concern about local problems, I think they could begin to make a difference, although I think the potential remains largely unexplored. In the Appendix, I have provided an empathy exercise for clubs, churches,

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groups that would provide an opportunity for black and white to get to know each other better. It can also be useful to families who wish to improve their communication.

But, having said this, I must also say that I think that many of us, black and white, between 40 or 45 and on, just have too many shackles from the past to understand and respond with much more than a Band-Aid approach to what's going on in today's Bermuda. I hope I am wrong and certainly will be doing everything I can in my remaining years to prove that I am. However, as I said in earlier chapters, I believe the day care and school experiences of our children offer the best hope for tomorrow for race and, therefore, human relations to move beyond where they are now. Therefore, I will close this chapter with some specific observations and suggestions about schools and youth activities.

My first comment is that something must be done about the further integration of our schools. I don't know how it should be done, and I'm convinced that it should not be attempted until we can assure parents that any school that their children attend will be staffed by competent teachers who will be able to do justice to their minds and overall development. Unless and until that happens, parents (black as well as white) who can afford to do so will continue to send their children to private schools, so that increasingly, public schools will be for working-class

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children and private schools will be for the children (mostly white) whose parents have other aspirations for them. Schools are the best means we have to reduce racial and economic boundaries. Too many of our young people are spending their time in a largely one-colour, one-class environment. I suspect it even has something to do with the state of labour-management relations.

Another challenge as far as school is concerned is that the curriculum at no time includes any course that deals with what psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology, literature, and history have to tell us about prejudice and discrimination. Therefore, children will not have the knowledge to understand and counteract the prejudices of adults with whom they come in contact or to prevent any negative interracial experiences from becoming seeds of future prejudice.

However, recently I was delighted to see an outline of the Health and Family Life Education Course for the Secondary School Certificate. Its description of the “life-management skills” that will be taught is admirable, as is the section describing the atmosphere that is conducive to the discussion of sensitive topics. Also worth noting is the recommendation that the “whole school approach” should be followed and that, “For example, the teachers of physical education will reinforce the need for exercise and physical fitness (and) ... teachers of history will discuss the role of the slave and

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alcohol trades and their consequences to our present society.” In the section on Mental Health, students will be asked to define self-image, self-esteem, self-concept, and prejudice.

Fault cannot be found with such objectives. They are but another example of my comment in an earlier chapter that the Ministry of Education has not been recognised for its efforts to improve our schools. But, as I have also observed in connection with *The Education Planning Team Final Report*, good intentions are not good enough. Effective problem-solving requires that the means are available in order to assure the success of the end. And the basic fact about what happens in school depends on the means. As I hope was confirmed in previous chapters, the means are the teachers. There is no reference to this in the recommended Health and Family Life Education Course (27) that I saw.

It may be that the Ministry has already taken stock of its teaching resources and considered what I think is the reality about many teachers, namely, that they have had little experience or lack skill in leading the type of discussions that will be required if the Course is not to become another exercise in being told what one should think. This deficiency should not be surprising. There are few teacher-training colleges that develop such skills. And our schools are largely occupied with the memory skills required to remember and repeat what the text-books have to say so that Bermuda can hold up its



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head in the percentage of students who pass exams. The result is that there is little time for discussion, irrespective of what teachers might want. But, apart from that, I think many teachers remain fearful that free and open discussion will result in indiscipline.

I believe that an objective stock-taking by the Ministry of teacher knowledge would show that few have the understanding of the psychology or other aspects of prejudice, as well as most of the other subjects that are included in the proposed Health and Family Life Education Course. Certainly, the few teachers I have met who are concerned about prejudice qualify more as propagandists than they do as educators who can stimulate free discussion. Brainwashing has no place in school, no matter how worthy the message.

My other major concern is that the proposed Course covers too much territory and that the grading system places too great an emphasis on traditional evaluation devices such as multiple-choice tests (60 per cent), project book/binders (20 per cent), and special home and school assignments (10 per cent). Only 10 per cent is for participation in classroom activities and discussions and there appears to be no recognition of the importance of testing knowledge and understanding through role-playing and other proven ways of learning through simulations of real-life experiences.

In summary, it is my view that the Ministry of Education lacks the teaching resources required to

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implement the praiseworthy intentions of the Health and Family Life Education Course, which, I understand, will also be taught in primary school, though, at this time, unfortunately, will not be compulsory.

It would also be helpful if the achievements and contributions of black people were “integrated” into the curriculum, along with those of other races and nationalities. History is still largely written in terms of white heroes and villains and the contributions of blacks are often presented by blacks to blacks outside of school or in schools that are largely all-black.

Then there is the tremendous potential but seeming lack of support by white teachers for the Teen Council and its annual Teen Conference. In spite of the ongoing efforts of the sponsors to encourage and attract white students, it remains largely a forum for black young people. Indeed, except for American students and teachers from Roger Chaffee School, next to no white Bermudians attend, except to receive the awards at the closing banquet. Talk about a willingness by black Bermudians to go the second mile and turn the other cheek! It really isn't good enough.

I am sure that the Teen Council and Teen Conference could become a truly representative gathering of all young people who live here if the Ministry of Education, but especially white head teachers, really encouraged participation by extending themselves beyond an announcement or two on bulletin

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boards and at school assemblies. Conference topics should be discussed in and out of class well before the Conference and every effort made to assure that all schools are well represented. Time should also be set aside for reports in school assemblies from school delegates.

Most important of all, white head teachers and classroom teachers should confirm their support by their attendance at the opening of the Conference and the closing banquet. Apart from the example this would set, it would also encourage white young people to attend who might otherwise fear that the Council and Conference will turn out to be another forum for reciting the white man's sins and the black man's achievements and frustrations.

I find it alarming that Bermuda remains an Island where black and white young people seem, apart from the activities of one or two youth groups with religious sponsorship, to have so little meaningful contact with each other. And, certainly, I would not describe what goes on in school as meaningful as far as sound human relations is concerned.

This would seem to mean that there is no difference between the situation that existed in the early 1950s and now. When I returned as Youth Organiser with the Social Welfare Board in 1951, it was taken for granted that the summer playgrounds that had been started by a predecessor would be located on the playing fields of black schools and black clubs. I made it clear to the chairperson of

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that I would resign if this policy continued. Further, before returning to Canada, I would go up and down the Island publicising the Board's unwritten policy. I got my way and sought playgrounds at Saltus and several other schools that were then for white children only. Of course, permission was not obtained, but, contrary to what had happened in previous years, circulars advertising the programme were sent to all schools and not just those for black children.

And what was the response? With one or two exceptions, only white children from Roger Chaffee attended. I don't know what the composition of today's summer playgrounds is, but, if it has been improved, it certainly isn't reflected in the membership of the Teen Council and Conference.

I said a few pages back that I think the hope lies with what happens to today's young people, and that too many of us are handicapped by what has gone before and by our simplistic understanding of what's going on around us now. However, I would like to close this chapter with one suggestion that indicates my pessimism is based less on conviction than the desire to provoke us old dogs into action.

I recommend that a body composed of people (not just Bermudians), with credentials that are impeccable in the eyes of black and white Bermudians, convene an equally reputable group of young and old residents. The objective would be to devote

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as many sessions and as much time as may be required to consider problems involving race and human relations in Bermuda and ways in which any problems that are identified can be remedied or alleviated.

I suggest that, before actual discussions are begun, a firm with proven competence in the area of investigating human relations be employed to undertake a survey of race and human relations in Bermuda. The information obtained would provide the data for the discussions of the proposed representative body, which I suggest be a special committee of the Race Relations Council, as long as it can be assured by Government of complete independence. I also believe it is important that the Council have the benefit of consultation with appropriate authorities and, of course, have the funds to make this and the recommended survey possible. The proposed committee should remain as an action group after its report has been presented with the responsibility of reporting progress on the implementation of its recommendations. Also, unlike the reports of the Advisory Board on the Misuse of Drugs, the reports of the proposed committee should not be discussed with or vetted by Government before they are published.

It may seem that I am being overly cautious and suspicious as far as Government is concerned. Although my 16 years as a civil servant convinced me that Government is often unfairly criticised

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by the press and public alike, I also believe that the name of the game in this day and age is party politics. Unfortunately, this all too often means that Government and Opposition have difficulty in distinguishing “between the interests of a people and a society, and those of a government and party,” to quote Professor Zeev Sternhell of the University of Jerusalem (*The Guardian*, April 2, 1989). The conclusion I draw from this is that Government will be responsive to the extent that we the people become knowledgeable about the problems and challenges that face us, and make our voices heard if Government seems to be going off half-cocked.

Returning to the proposal concerning a special committee to get the facts about race and human relations, it is true that Government has not in the past shown any real commitment to the need for social research. Hopefully, the fact that our problems are not getting any fewer or any less serious will convince those we elect that a change of heart is in order.

The American entrepreneur and philanthropist Armand Hammer is quoted on the first page of *Shackles of the Past*. I think this last chapter is a good place to repeat the conclusions he has reached after more than 80 years of living:

*I have been a citizen of the world all my adult life. I have lived abroad and have traveled so much in the world that I know,*

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*with the certainty of long experience, that people are the same wherever you may go; and that they are divided from each other only by misunderstanding and prejudice.*

And now, there remains but the Epilogue and the Appendices.

## EPILOGUE

When I began *Shackles of the Past*, its title was BER-MUDA THEN AND NOW and I planned on it being about 60 pages in length. That was before I realised that my years under the “heavy manners” of the civil service had left me with a fair amount to get off my chest, especially since, prior to my return to Bermuda, I had been pretty well free to speak my mind when I was so inclined.

So, as I draw to a close, the 60 pages have trebled and a new title has emerged. Has it been worth it?

For me it has, because it has provided an opportunity to examine what has emerged as near and dear to me after 63 years on this earth.

But will *Shackles of the Past* make any difference? Will it help to persuade Government of the folly of flying blind, of the need to become more knowledgeable about what effect life in Bermuda is having on us, on our humanness? Are we becoming more tolerant and more understanding, and less judgmental of ourselves and others?



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Will we transform our schools and, therefore, the quality of the lives of our children by making sure that our teachers have the human relations or interpersonal skills that we now know are necessary if schools are to be fit places for children? Or will we go on settling for half-measures and blaming Government and the Ministry of Education when nothing seems to change?

And will we be able to surmount the racial and other divisions that sour and inhibit many of our relationships, and prevent us from working together on the problems and challenges that are becoming increasingly difficult to contain on this tight little Island?

Will *Shackles of the Past* be shot down with “Who the hell does he think he is, telling us what to do?” Will we discredit the messenger and fail to give the message a fair hearing before deciding it has nothing to say to us?

A friend of mine has warned me that it will be business as usual. Unlike me, he has lived here all his life, and he thinks I’m pretty naive to imagine that we Bermudians will let anything distract our attention from acquiring as much of the goodies of life in as short a time as possible.

Another friend is also not very hopeful, but for a different reason. She believes that too much of what I have to say — especially about human relations — will make people uncomfortable, since it requires that one’s own beliefs and behaviour be examined.

## *Epilogue*

“How are my human relations with my wife, my children, my friends, my students, my employees, my employer, my congregation, with black, with white and so on?”

I think they may be right and I’m surprised, but pleased, that it doesn’t bother me as it once would have. Surprised because it represents a major change that has taken place in me since 1953 when I shook the dust (so I thought) of Bermuda from my feet. In 1953 and for quite a few years thereafter, I was hell-bent convinced that the world was going to be a significantly better place in my lifetime. I knew what and who the problems were and the required remedies.

I have done a fair amount of living since then, and writing this book has made me realise that my certainties are now few and far between. Indeed, I really don’t know if what is going on in Bermuda and the world today heralds another beginning or the beginning of another end.

Not too long ago, this uncertainty would have been hard for me to live with. But, as so often happens when one’s cherished beliefs are challenged, it has forced me to take stock of my life and what I have learned from it. The result has been that one certainty has emerged and I find that it is more than enough for whatever time I have remaining.

Although I don’t know what tomorrow holds in store or whether my efforts to help improve conditions will be successful, this I do know. My relations

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with other people are for good or ill and it is within my power to make sure that, for the most part, they are helpful and not harmful. In my opinion, the Good News of this century is that we know what kinds of human relations are good for people. The question is whether we will take urgent steps to reduce the considerable gap between what we know and what we do.

During the time I lived in Canada, the Province of Prince Edward Island announced that it planned to introduce a programme for the improvement of livestock. Is it really too much to expect that we develop the same sense of urgency about the quality of our lives? Former Premier Manning of the Province of Alberta once suggested that the private sector of society must show, not only whether it has a profit or loss at the end of a year, but also whether it has been a good citizen. I think the time has come when we should expect that a country measure its successes and failures and the successes and failures of all its institutions in terms of whether they foster or inhibit mental health.

Also, is it too far-fetched to suggest that we should assess our Members of Parliament and other leaders on the basis of their human relation quotient in the area of empathy, regard, and genuineness, especially genuineness or honesty?

In 1970, I was asked by the School of Social Work of McMaster University to give the Second Annual Hugh C. Arrell Memorial Lecture. My theme was

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*Too Late to be Human?* During the course of the lecture, I suggested that there is considerable evidence that:

There is a great sense of our incompleteness ... as humans abroad in the land and an almost desperate and, often, despairing yearning to become — to become more human, more self-confirmed, more self-fulfilled, more actualised. More and more of us, I submit, realise, or perhaps only vaguely sense that we're all bottled up, that we're somehow incomplete or not quite what we might or should or could be.

My experiences since returning to Bermuda have more than confirmed this conviction. It would be good to think that at least a few of those who read these pages will share my belief that we have the know-how to do something about it by ridding ourselves of some of our *Shackles of the Past*.

This island home of ours really could be another world — still with problems and far from perfect — but a whole lot better for a whole lot more people than it currently is.

## Appendix 1

### TEACHER TRAINING

Just before *Shackles of the Past* went to the printers, under the headline, “Back to School for the Bosses,” *The Mid-Ocean News* (March 31, 1989) reported the Minister of Education as saying that the key to improving the school system is educating the educators. *The Mid-Ocean* then described a one-and-a-half day weekend seminar for Ministry management. The Permanent Secretary said it was to help people “identify more clearly their own skills ... to look at themselves and their management style ... (and) not only give insights about themselves, but also about their colleagues.”

The Minister’s statement that teachers are the key to what goes on in school is very encouraging, as was the seminar for the “bosses”. This recognises, as noted on page 76, that the effectiveness of a teacher can be adversely affected if supervisors are lacking the required interpersonal skills.

The seminar was organised by Exemplary Consultants, a Canadian firm. This is also encouraging and in harmony with what was said earlier: until

## *Appendix 1*

we are confident we have the expertise locally we should employ experienced and proven experts from abroad.

The seminar was also noteworthy in that it required the personal involvement of the participants. However, it is not clear from the news report if, in addition to helping them “to look at themselves and their management style,” it also made it clear that management styles that are not firmly based on the interpersonal skills discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 have been shown to be ineffective and, sometimes, destructive.

I also could not tell from the press report if the seminar concentrated on developing the required interpersonal skills or belonged to what on page 77 I referred to as “Sensitivity training and ‘group talk’ seminars.” The latter can be great for staff morale and esprit de corps, but there is no guarantee of carry-over into behaviour. Interpersonal skills have to be taught and practised if they are not to become buzz words that everyone endorses but few practise.

My last observation is that I hope the Ministry of Education will not go about its staff training by bringing in a succession of the same or different consultants. Experience has shown that, no matter how expert they are, such an in-and-out approach is far less effective than having expert consultants on the scene all of the time. This is the reason the First Recommendation proposes that a Teacher Effective-

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ness, Assessment, Training, and Research Centre be established (page 75). Such a Centre would assure consistency, continuity, and on-going supervision, control, and evaluation. Consultants who have responsibilities in other countries cannot provide this service.

If the Ministry of Education has chosen the in-and-out model for staff training and development, I urge it to reconsider. We have a centre and staff for testing our driving skills and vehicles, a body to test our GPs, and health inspectors to inspect and assure the quality of what we eat. Surely, it's not asking too much to have a properly staffed Centre with the responsibility of making sure that our children are in good hands.

We only have to look around us to see that the time for cutting corners and half-measures has long since passed. Tomorrow's citizens are obviously going to have their work cut out for them. We had better make sure now that they are able to rise to the occasion.

## *Appendix 2*

### HUMAN ENVIRONMENT INVENTORY

The following is based on the best information we have about what makes for good human relations.

Is it a Common, Occasional, or Rare experience to be with someone:

- who really knows just how you think and feel about things;
- who is interested in you and your opinions and feelings, no matter how much he may agree or disagree with you;
- who notices your good points and accomplishments as much as your failings;
- who, if he did anything that upset you, you could tell him without being made to feel it would have been better to have kept your feelings to yourself;
- whom you can depend on to be honest with you, even if he might have something to say that you might not like;
- who, after you've accomplished something, doesn't get jealous or tell you how you might have made it even better if you had just ... (take your pick);



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- who encourages you to do things for yourself and doesn't get upset if you make a mistake;
- who makes you feel it is more important for you to be true to yourself than to him?

If you rarely or only occasionally are with someone like this in your home, at school, where you work, at church, or in your club, then it is probably not a good place to be.

Do you think the people you know see you as someone with these qualities? If not, you could be.

### *Appendix 3*

#### EMPATHY EXERCISE

It is preferable to have three people for this exercise, but it can be done by two. A minimum of half an hour is required, but an hour to an hour and a half is preferable.

When there are three people, one person is appointed as the observer, another is the listener, and the third person tells the listener of some incident, opinion, or concern that is important to him.

The first part of the exercise is over when the speaker has finished what he has to say and the listener sums up what he has heard by saying, "In other words, you think (believe, feel, etc.) that ..." or words to that effect. Then the speaker tells the listener, "That's exactly (partly, not at all) what I think (believe, feel, etc.)." This is followed by the observer's comments on what he thought the listener did that helped him to tune in to the speaker or what seemed to prevent this from happening.

If the aim is to improve communication between races or ethnic groups, it is, of course, important

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that the listener and speaker not be of the same race or group.

The listener naturally asks any questions or makes any comments he wishes in order to understand the speaker's views and feelings. It should be remembered that it is the purpose of the empathy exercise to understand the speaker and to give him the feeling you understand where he's coming from. What the listener thinks about what he is hearing is unimportant for this exercise. Indeed, it can stand in the way of empathy. Therefore, questions and observations that clarify what the listener thinks he is hearing or sensing are usually helpful, while critical comments often turn into debates and arguments. When the speaker feels he has been listened to with respect and understanding, he is usually willing to pay attention to the listener's opinions and reactions.

This exercise can be used by groups by dividing those present into threes. It can also help to improve communication and understanding between partners and parents and children.

Speakers should only talk about something they can share comfortably with the listener and observer, and it is essential that, whatever is said it does not go beyond the threesome or twosome.

A final word of advice. Listeners should never pretend to understand when they don't.

## *Appendix 4*

### EMPATHY AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

I prepared the following for staff of the Ministry of Health and Social Services, but include it here because it may have something to offer to readers when they are in situations where empathy is in order.

My dictionary defines empathy as the capacity for participating in another person's feelings or ideas. Empathy is not sympathy, which is feeling for another person. Empathy is seeing the world through another person's eyes as that person experiences it, not as we would if we were in the same situation.

Of course, our experience can help us to understand how other people feel or think, but it can result in our jumping to false conclusions. Just as no two people are alike, so, too, do we all have our own unique way of responding to the world in which we live. The danger of too quickly assuming we understand someone is that we won't listen and observe as attentively as we should.

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In other words, our experience can be a stepping stone to empathy, but it can also be a stumbling block. One study found that people who think they are alike are often less alike than they think they are, and two people who see themselves as different from each other are often less different than they actually are.

In trying to understand or be empathic with other people, we often help them to clarify and get a better understanding of their feelings and problems. Indeed, sometimes they come to realise that things aren't as bad as they thought they were, or even that their feelings or problems are not exactly what they imagined them to be. And empathy can assist in breaking people's problems into bite-sized pieces.

Empathy is also important in problem-solving because, when we communicate to people that we want to understand them and their situation, we are at the same time letting them know that we think their feelings, thoughts, and experiences are worth considering. Many people have a low opinion of themselves and don't think they have anything to say that's worthwhile. Until they begin to believe in themselves, they will probably regard their situations as hopeless and look to others to rescue them.

Another by-product of empathy is that it counteracts the common tendency to judge people in terms of whether we agree or disagree with them or like or dislike them. Most people, even those who have known little else but criticism, don't take kindly to

#### *Appendix 4*

or are demoralised by being judged or condemned. However, after their confidence has been gained and they have experienced our interest and understanding, they are usually willing to hear and discuss things that previously would have resulted in a blank stare or hostile reaction.

Of course, we find some people more likable than others. This is just a fact of life. While empathy is not guaranteed to make us like someone, it is difficult to dislike or condemn someone we've really come to understand. In fact, when we dislike people, it is often a sign that we don't understand them or that they possess qualities that we dislike in ourselves.

Empathy requires not only that we have an accurate understanding of people, but that they also feel that we understand them. Therefore, we should regularly check with them to make sure that our understanding of them is the same as theirs.

Our careful listening to and observation of a person often result in our understanding the problem before the person does. We've probably all had the experience of saying, "In other words, you feel ...", and then, as the light dawns on the person's face, hearing the reply, "I never really looked at it that way, but you're right, that is what I feel." When this happens, a significant step in problem-solving has been taken, because the problem has been clarified and, therefore, begins to be less threatening and more manageable.

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However, we can lose touch with people if we prematurely share with them something that may be very obvious to us, but not to them, or that they are not ready to talk about. Naturally, when we think we understand, we want to share it. But it is important to remember that, if we move too far ahead of where the person is, it can become a barrier instead of a bridge. No matter how right we may be, if the person is not ready to face or discuss it, then, as the highway safety people say, we're dead right, but also dead wrong.

This should not make us overly cautious or afraid to be wrong. Problem-solving often involves finding out what something is not, in order to get a better understanding of what it is.

One threat to the trust that is necessary for empathy to thrive is to pretend to understand when we really don't. It means that the honesty that we brought to the encounter goes, and, once a person begins to sense that we are not being truthful, or are beating about the bush, an uneasiness begins to set in and doubts arise about our sincerity and interest.

Admitting that we haven't quite understood also sets a good example. Many people have been so exposed to perfectionistic (100 per cent or bad) standards that they believe it is a sign of weakness to make or admit a mistake, instead of recognizing that it is just part of what it is to be human. This can be a real handicap when it comes to dealing with their problems. They either feel it necessary to excuse,

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explain, or condemn themselves, or to blame others for their predicament. This just fosters arguments and wastes energy that is better devoted to problem-solving.

Another by-product of empathy is that, when people feel respected and understood, they often begin to develop more respect for and understanding of themselves, and become more tolerant of others. This is a major gain, because intolerance and a lack of sensitivity to the feelings of others are often basic causes of many problems between partners, between parents and children, and at work.

Empathy also requires that we remember that there is usually more to a person than meets the eye, or the ear, for that matter. Someone may say, “People don’t give a damn about anything or anyone but themselves,” and this may be a true expression of the person’s feelings. But it may also mean, “No one gives a damn about me.” This, in turn, may be the person’s way of saying, “I wonder if you really care about me or would if you really knew me?”

In other words, if we want to have more than a surface understanding of people, we need to be aware of the different meanings there can be in what they say. We’ve all seen people (including ourselves) say they are not upset, while, at the same time, posture, voice, and facial expression tell a different story.

All of which adds up to a few of the reasons that empathy is indispensable in problem-solving. It



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helps people to clarify and identify what their feelings, problems, and challenges are. It lets them know of our interest and concern. Hopefully, it exposes them to someone who is honest and without pretensions. And it can contribute to people's self-respect, self-confidence, and ability to cope with life. Empathy can liberate people from the shackles of the past and present.

This is often no easy thing. Some people have lived with their difficulties for so long that they can't imagine any other way of life. Sometimes, of course, they get a lot of attention and sympathy because of their problems — real or imagined — and they don't want to lose this. From time to time, they unburden themselves to some sympathetic (not empathic) person, perhaps getting temporary relief, but they go back to living as they always have. An empathic person will consider ways of encouraging, persuading, or challenging such people to act upon their understanding of their problems. This is the stage of problem-solving that really puts a human relationship to the test. If we have been able to communicate our empathy and, by so doing, our respect, concern, and genuineness, our relationship with an individual should be able to withstand the ups and downs that are usually the price that must be paid if problems are to be solved and the quality of our lives improved.

A good beginning for those who wish to improve their empathy is to improve their skill in listening.

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This can be done in a very short period of time. Books and cassette tapes are available for those who want to become better listeners and, as a result, be in possession of a quality that is the foundation of empathy and good human relations, whether it be in the home, school, or community, or between people of different skin colour, background, or belief.