
Dialogue

The purpose of the **Dialogue** section is to provide readers with an opportunity to respond in depth to ideas presented in this or other issues. **Dialogue** allows *Advanced Development* to be interactive with readers, as well as providing continuity from issue to issue. In this issue, we present two articles which complement material that appeared in Volume 3 of *Advanced Development*: more information about our last moral exemplar, Etty Hillesum, and a hypothetical dialogue between Jean Houston and Dana Zohar, author of *The Quantum Self*.

Etty Hillesum: "The Thinking Heart of the Barracks"

Michael M. Piechowski

Michael M. Piechowski, Ph.D., is the William B. Mark Professor in Social Science at Northland College, Ashland, WI, and co-author of *Theory of Levels of Emotional Development* (Volumes 1 and 2) with Kazimierz Dabrowski. He has written extensively in the field of gifted education and produced psychological biographies of Antoine de Saint Exupery, Eleanor Roosevelt and Leta Stetter Hollingworth.

ABSTRACT: *"The thinking heart of the barracks" is how Etty Hillesum described herself when she was an inmate of a German concentration camp in World War II. She entered voluntarily to prepare herself for the inevitable end. Her diary is the story of her inner transformation, of being within herself a battlefield for the problems of our times, of finding joy and inner peace in the face of persecution, suffering and death. Love perfected her will—love for people and love for God. Her diary is one of the most detailed records of the work of love and will that makes advanced development possible.*

Fifty years ago in 1941, at the start of her diary, Etty Hillesum was 27 years old. Living in Amsterdam, she was a student of Russian and earned her living tutoring in Russian. She described herself as not particularly pretty, but fantasized about being beautiful and drawing attention to herself. With her black hair, emotional intensity and animation, she was described by some as a "Russian Carmen." Her quick intelligence and vivid imagination were matched by her great capacity for loving and making love. She had many friends and many lovers. She described herself as adventurous and "accomplished in bed, just about seasoned enough I should think to be counted among the better lovers, and love does suit me to perfection"

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(Hillesum, 1981/1985, p. 1). She was 15 when the urge to write awakened in her. She certainly had what it takes to be a writer: "an irrepressible objective curiosity, a passionate interest in everything that touches the world and its people and my own motives" (p. 41).

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

In Dabrowski's terms, Etty's inner growth is a clear example of transforming growth, of which the first phase (level III) is the conflict between the higher and the lower in oneself.¹ The lower is what one wants to remove; hence this is what one does not accept in oneself. In the first part of the diary we witness her inner struggles to fight restlessness, inner chaos, depression, despair, and physical pain. These struggles brought her more confidence in herself, a sense of growing stronger and of gaining more inner freedom. Dabrowski stressed the rejection of the lower self as the essential dynamic of multilevel growth. His theory makes no reference to acceptance other than to equate it with complacency. But as Etty resolved her inner conflicts, she grew in acceptance of herself and of life in its entirety, with all the good and all the bad.

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

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

“Combat Ready”

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

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

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

Her first goal for therapy with Spier was to be able to give her life a “reasonable and satisfactory purpose” (p. 1). Her more distant goal was “to finish up as an adult, capable of helping other souls who are in trouble, and of creating some sort of clarity through my work for others, for that's what it's all about” (p. 9). Although modestly expressed, there is a sense of mission, of a goal outside herself, a characteristic of self-actualizing people; there is also an emphasis on being of service to others. She took up the work of inner psychic transformation. But it was hard going at first. She realized that fantasy and escapist dreams would not gain her peace and clarity: “It is right here, in this very place, in the here and now, that I must find them. But it is all so very terribly difficult and I feel so heavy-hearted” (p. 36). Nevertheless, she persevered and found the key principle, which is to live in the present. To be mature, to be an adult, is one of the recurrent themes in her diary: growth toward self-control, responsibility, inner peace, overcoming ill-health and weakness of the body, and inner preparation for the more and more severe trials ahead.

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

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

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

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

I have become just a little stronger again. I can fight things with myself.... I had the desperate feeling that I was tied to him and that because of that I was in for an utterly miserable time. But I pulled myself out of it although I don't know quite how. Not by arguing with myself, but by tugging with all my mental strength at some imaginary rope. I threw all my weight behind it and stood my ground and suddenly I felt that I was free again. (p. 29)

Once that possessive attachment was broken, she placed no more expectations on the other: “I made no more demands on him, I wanted nothing from him, I took him as he was and enjoyed him” (p. 29). She was puzzled by the process, and understandably so. We grow up with much advice and exhortation to be good, but little light on how to fight our inner battles to become good. “I'd like to know how I did it.... And the lesson I learned is this: thought doesn't help; what you need is not causal explanations but will and a great deal of mental energy” (p. 30).

In the initial phase of transforming growth (level III) one tries to find the true meaning and purpose to one's life.¹ The process does not go smoothly: “I still lack a basic tune, a steady undercurrent; the inner source that feeds me keeps drying up” (p. 37). But within a few weeks she recorded progress: “I no longer go to pieces under the strain of my disparate feelings,” and better still, “I sometimes feel like a post standing in a raging sea, lashed on all sides by the waves” (p. 41).

She fought many conflicts within herself and she resolved all of them: jealousy gave way to love, appreciation, and freedom; dislike of her mother gave way to understanding and empathy; feeling inhibited and

self-conscious with her father was replaced by warmth toward him; conflicts over her writing, guilt over leading an easy life when others suffered increasing hardship, her recurrent ill-health, lack of self-control, lack of self-discipline, depressions, upsets, turmoil and relapses all were resolved in an increasingly deliberate and determined effort at inner psychic transformation. The key effort was striving for emotional self-reliance, and the key to that was her spirit of acceptance and receptiveness.

It is a slow and painful process, this striving after true inner freedom. Growing more and more certain that there is no help or assurance or refuge in others, that the others are just as uncertain and helpless and weak as you are. You are always thrown back to your own resources. There is nothing else. (p. 56)

Every situation, every external difficulty, every increase in the Nazi terror brought her back to her own inner work: "I have gradually come to realize that on those days when you are at odds with your neighbors you are really at odds with yourself" (p. 66). She expressed her sense of growth in phrases such as this: "Everything is a growing process. And in between, emotions and sensations that strike you like lightning. But still the most important thing is the organic process of growing" (p. 106).

She strove for simplicity, for a balance between her outer and her inner life. She described her goals for the practice of meditation:

To turn one's innermost being into a vast and empty plain, with none of the treacherous undergrowth to impede the view. So that something of "God" can enter you, and something of "Love" too. Not the kind of Love-de-luxe that you revel in deliciously for half an hour taking pride in how sublime you feel, but the love you can apply to small everyday things. (p. 27)

The appreciation of "small everyday things" afresh is characteristic of self-actualizing people, and that came easily to her. Clearing the mind and the heart was a harder task, as it invariably is:

There is a really deep well inside me. And in it dwells God. Sometimes I am there too. But more often stones and grit block the well and God is buried beneath. Then He must be dug out again. (p. 4)

She began practicing meditation in early June of 1941. In November she recorded a sudden inner change: "Something has just happened to me.... It is as if I had been pulled back abruptly to my roots, and had become a little more self-reliant and independent" (p. 64). A couple of weeks later she described one of her peak experiences which apparently were fairly frequent:

everything feels calm again... a veil envelops me through which life seems more serene and often much friendlier as well. And a feeling of being at one with all existence. No longer: I want this or that, but: life is great and good and fascinating and eternal.... It is in these moments...that a small piece of eternity descends on me with a sweeping wingbeat. (pp. 74-75)

She made an effort to listen to her inner voice, to follow her own rhythm, and live in accordance with it: "The only certainties about what is right and wrong are those which spring from sources deep inside oneself" (p. 75).

A Year of Intense Inner Growth

When she took stock of that first year on December 31, 1941, she evaluated it as the richest and most fruitful year of her life.

This year has meant...greater awareness and hence easier access to my inner resources.... And I listen to myself, allow myself to be led, not by anything on the outside, but by what wells up from within. It's still no more than a beginning, I know. But it is no longer a shaky beginning, it has already taken root. (p. 81)

She felt that her inner growth was by then on a firm footing. This suggests, in Dabrowskian terms, that Etty's development reached level IV.² Subsequent entries record that she was no longer subject to despair, that her inner world was "all peace and quiet. It was a difficult road, though it all seems so simple and obvious now" (p. 85). Now she could be calm and confident about the direction of her life, confident because she was in control of it, her inner self having won many battles and gained a solid measure of inner peace. The extent of her inner transformation is well illustrated by the following excerpt from the last pages of her diary, at a time when she was very ill:

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

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

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

The Problem of Hatred

Besides the extent and depth of her spiritual growth, what gives her life a particular significance is her refusal—in the midst of increasing Nazi terror—to give in to hatred. Very early she recognized in herself the spontaneous impulse toward hatred of the Germans, which was shared by all around her, and it disturbed her that she felt this way (an example of inner conflict):

The whole nation must be destroyed root and branch. And now and then I say nastily, "They are all scum," and at the same time I feel terribly ashamed and deeply unhappy but can't stop even though I know that it's all wrong. (p. 11)

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

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

From then on her inner growth exhibited characteristics of level IV.²

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

The rottenness of others is in us, too. I see no other solution...than to turn inwards and to root out all the rottenness there. I no longer believe that we can change anything in the world until we have first changed

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ourselves. And that seems to me the only lesson to be learned from this war. That we must look inside ourselves and nowhere else. (p. 87, February 19, 1942)

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

The inner world of each individual forms the outer world, not the other way round, a principle affirmed by Peace Pilgrim as well (Piechowski, 1991b).

The Central Role of Acceptance

Her inner growth had several distinctive features: a genuine acceptance of life in its totality of all that is good and all that is bad; deep and abiding compassion; preparation for upcoming hardships, which she embraced willingly; prayer, as evidenced by over thirty spontaneous personal prayers recorded in her diary; the silent voice of her deeper self; the sense of life itself as the source of meaning and strength; an inner peace, which she gained in greater and greater measure; and the riches of the vast inner spaces of her being.

The theme of acceptance is prominent in her diary. This should not be interpreted as being satisfied with oneself because it is just the opposite. It is acceptance of the way one is as the raw material to be transformed. Acceptance can work marvels because it releases all the energy tied up in resistance, fear, and in opposition to one's reality in the here and now. To dream of being in a different situation where one thinks one's problems could be more effectively dealt with is a delusion and an escape from the only reality there is—the present moment.

Living and dying, sorrow and joy, the blisters on my feet [in the hot summer of 1942 Jews were prohibited from using public transportation] and the jasmine behind the house, the persecution, the unspeakable horrors—it is all as one in me and I accept it all as one mighty whole and begin to grasp it better if only for myself, without being able to explain to anyone else how it all hangs together. (p. 161)

Etty said about Spier, "S. heals people by teaching them to suffer and to accept" (p. 77). Not only is acceptance of life a dominant theme in her diary, but also acceptance and the value of suffering: "most of us in the West don't understand the art of suffering and experience a thousand fears instead. We cease to be alive, being full of fear, bitterness, hatred and despair" (p. 159),

and further, "man suffers most through his fear of suffering" (p. 230). In the context of the war and arrests, torture, and regular transports of Jews to the concentration camps in Poland, the view of suffering expressed by Etty is radical: "Suffering has always been with us, does it really matter in what form it comes?" (p. 159). "And the fact that, nowadays, we have yellow stars and concentration camps is of secondary importance" (p. 135); what "is of primary importance is how we bear it and how we fit it into our lives" (p. 160).

"A Kneeler in Training"

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

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

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

A desire to kneel down sometimes pulses through my body, or rather it is as if my body had been meant and made for the act of kneeling. Sometimes in moments of deep gratitude, kneeling down becomes an overwhelming urge, head deeply bowed, hands before my face. It has become a gesture embedded in my body. (p. 109)

Etty's prayer life was tested to the limit:

It is sometimes hard to take in and comprehend, oh God, what those created in Your likeness do to each other in these disjointed days.... I try to look things straight in the face, even the worst crimes and to discover the small, naked human being amidst the monstrous wreckage caused by man's senseless deeds.... I try to face up to Your world, God.... I continue to praise Your creation, God, despite everything. (p. 141)

She said this long before she went to Westerbork, the inhumanly overcrowded transit camp, where the extent of human misery was exhausting to the limits of her inner strength and compassion. She volunteered to go there in a spirit of preparation and in order to share in what others had to go through. Two weeks before she went from Westerbork on a transport to Auschwitz, Etty wrote about the terror that struck in her heart when she saw the coldly cruel and indifferent faces of the green-uniformed German guards:

I have never been so frightened of anything in my life as I was of these faces. I sank to my knees with the words that preside over human life. And God made man after His likeness. That passage spent a difficult morning with me. (p. 258)

She knew that Westerbork was true hell.

One of her insights into the nature of prayer was how to pray for others, a logical extension of her principle of acceptance:

Praying to God for something for yourself strikes me as being too childish for words.... to pray for another's well-being is something I find childish as well; one should only pray that another should have enough strength to shoulder his burden. If you do that, you lend him some of your own strength. (p. 192)

Her insight into suffering complemented this. She came upon it in Westerbork in the wake of her prolonged struggle over having to witness her parents' and her brother's deprivation:

It will be my parents' turn to leave soon [on a transport], if by some miracle not this week then certainly one of the next. And I must learn to accept this as well.... I shan't go, I just can't. It is easier to pray for someone from a distance than to see him suffer by your side. It is not fear of Poland that keeps me from going with my parents, but fear of seeing them suffer. And that, too, is cowardice. (p. 249)

The crux of that fear and pain was that one can only accept for oneself and not for others. Two months later all the Hillesums were put on the same transport. Having to go with them hit Etty very hard at first, but she recovered and accepted it as she did all the difficult tests and hard trials.

She succeeded in also accepting those trials that felt too hard to endure.

A few days ago I thought that nothing more could happen to me, that I had suffered everything in anticipation, but today I suddenly realised that things can indeed weigh more heavily on me than I ever thought possible. And they were very, very heavy.... But now I know that I shall always get the better of despair. (p. 191)

And she did. She understood perfectly the true meaning of surrender, which is to say that what makes surrender true is when it becomes unconditional:

"I shall have to surrender much more of me to You, oh God. And also stop making conditions: if only I remain healthy, and so on..." Even if I am not healthy, life goes on, doesn't it? I have no right to lay down conditions. I will not do so in the future. And the moment I made that resolution, my stomach-ache suddenly became quite a lot better. (p. 227)

Wide Plains Beyond Time and Space

If we could by some magical or mystic means see the inner space of Etty's heart and soul, we would be surprised by how vast, deep, varied, and rich it was. The theme of inner space takes a number of forms. She often felt the reverse of how we usually respond to our surroundings: that "the outer landscape was the reflection of the inner" (p. 80), that the sky within her was as wide as the one above (p. 151), that cherished things which were gone were alive within her ["somewhere inside me the jasmine continues to blossom undisturbed, just as profusely and delicately as ever it did" (p. 188)]. Her inner stillness was a calm space into which she withdrew to rest, pray, and restore herself. This vast silence within her continued to grow and expand, reaching into transcendent regions: "there are wide plains inside me beyond time and space, and everything is played out there" (p. 213).

Etty's inner space became a playground and war arena for the forces of conflict. This notion came to her quite early:

I feel like a small battlefield, in which problems, or some of the problems, of our time are being fought out. All one can hope to do is to keep oneself humbly available, to allow oneself to be a battlefield. (p. 30)

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She carried this idea even further to say that we must put our inner space at the service of these problems. In other words, we each share directly in the responsibility of how things go:

Ultimately we just have one moral duty: to reclaim large areas of peace in ourselves, more and more peace, and reflect it toward others. And the more peace there is in us, the more peace there will be also in our troubled world. (p. 229)

Thus, to Etty the outer and the inner worlds existed in an exact relationship in which the inner shaped the outer, hence her conviction that "true peace will come only when every individual finds peace within himself" (p. 151). We find the same principle enunciated by Peace Pilgrim (1982), "Ultimate peace begins within; when we find peace within there will be no more conflict, no more occasion for war" (p.98).

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

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

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

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

Her answer to the despair brought on by the Nazi reign of terror was that life was larger than this, that it had its own meaning, that it was a cosmic principle, indestructible and unaffected by all the cruelty and persecution in the world. She knew that few people could understand this though it enabled her to affirm, in the mud and blowing sand (which was so bad that inmates begged those on the outside to send them goggles) behind the barbed wire of Westerbork, that life was beautiful. She knew it was strange to feel this amidst so much human misery but she did feel it—"that radiant feeling inside me, which encompasses but is untouched by all the suffering and all the violence" (p. 180)—and her serenity uplifted others. As noted by Gaarlandt in his introduction to Etty's diaries, survivors of Westerbork remembered her as a "luminous" personality.

The transpersonal dimension came to Etty in a moment of insight. She was reflecting on the necessity of walking long distances in the summer heat with a blister on her foot when suddenly she realized that

throughout the ages people have been tired and have worn their feet out on God's earth, in the cold and the heat, and that, too, is part of life. This sort of feeling has been growing stronger in me: a hint of eternity steals through my smallest daily activities and perceptions. I am not alone in my tiredness or sickness or fears, but at one with millions of others from many centuries and it is all part of life. (p. 165)

To realize that one is not apart from others—in Peace Pilgrim's words, to break through the illusion of separateness—is a significant step toward universal empathy, toward knowing what it means to love one's neighbor.

Through suffering I have learned that we must share our love with the whole of creation. Only thus we can gain admittance to it. But the price is high: much blood and tears. But all the suffering is worth it. (p. 154)

Brought to its logical conclusion it means to be able to recognize the humanity of every individual no matter how evil that person's actions might be. And to see how difficult this can be for us, all we need to do is to think of our prime villains, whether highly placed, or living under the same roof with us, or on the highway in front of us. Taking it even further we can decide to stop our angry thoughts at everyone else on whom we shower hostility within the privacy of our minds. If we are to take persons like Etty Hillesum and Peace Pilgrim seriously, then we must make every effort to stop violence where it starts—in our minds. Etty understood this as well as Peace did:

Why is there war? Perhaps because now and then I might be inclined to snap at my neighbor. Because I and my neighbor and everyone else do not have enough love. Yet we could fight war...by releasing, each day, the love which is shackled inside us, and giving it a chance to live. (p. 99)

Note 1.

Dabrowski's theory describes personality development as five levels of emotional development. In level I personality is integrated, the dominant concern is self-protection and survival, self-serving egocentrism reigns, and others are exploited—the world of dog-eat-dog mentality. In level II, one is like a reed in the wind lacking inner direction, being fragmented into many selves, submitting to the values of the group and espousing relativism of values and beliefs. In level III, one gains the sense of an ideal but not being able to reach it, one has moral concerns expressed as the split between higher and lower in oneself, consequently the process of inner transformation is under way. For more detail see articles by Nelson (1989) and Piechowski (1991a).

Note 2.

Level IV in Dabrowski's theory is the level of self-actualization just as Maslow described it when one's ideals and actions agree, when one arrives at a strong sense of moral responsibility and of being of service to others. In level V one attains inner peace and one lives and acts inspired by a powerful ideal, e.g., world peace, equal rights, sovereignty of all nations, universal love and compassion.

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