THE POWER OF SOUL

LIVING THE TWELVE VIRTUES

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Courtesy

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Virtue of Courtesy

In relation to the other virtues, courtesy may seem to stand almost as something secondary, a behavior that does not seem at an equal level with the other virtues. In comparison to courage, or love, or compassion, courtesy seems close to trivial. In some ways, courtesy is indeed quite small. This quality of seeming cosmically insignificant may actually make courtesy one of the most important of the virtues; it introduces us into the small way, the way of little things rather than large, high, and lofty imaginations.

Courtesy adds an extremely important tone to the whole of the circle of virtue; it keeps our imagination from soaring into heights that have nothing to do with our daily lives, or our ongoing relationships with others, or the mundane events that, in truth, occupy us most of the time. Courtesy is the virtue that removes the illusion of loftiness that can infect our imagination of the virtues and locates their action in the heart of the smallest deeds of our lives.

All virtue, we might say, begins with the declaration, "Be courteous to one another." This act holds together the extraordinary with the commonplace, and the performance of it places everyone within the great circle of the virtues. Thus, it is an act worth looking into, worth contemplating and meditating upon to see its essential character. Further, it is an act worthy of learning how to do in proper and healthy ways. If we find it difficult to approach another person with reverence, then certainly the performance of the other virtues will be impossible.

We cannot get along with each other very well without the help of

some intervening forms that make our connections with others have an ease about them, bringing moments of pleasure into the functional and mundane aspects of life, and smoothing the rough spots where the possibility of friction occurs. When courtesy is absent, rules have to be introduced to do the work of the virtue. For example, in the functional world of our work, there are generally outer constraints that dictate what kind of behaviors toward others are deemed acceptable, and which are not. Corporations, businesses, schools, and even charitable enterprises now promote internal training that has to do with treating others with the proper respect. These trainings concern matters such as racial relationships, sexual conduct, and customer relations.

The presence of such training indicates the absence of the virtue of courtesy in the world. We are not brought up with an education into the ways of this virtue. While the gestures of trying to add an education into manners later on in life are certainly important and often do a great deal to change attitudes and prejudices, they are finally inadequate substitutes for far deeper soul qualities. Further, since these gestures take the form of training, of "how to do it" workshops, they easily degrade into a kind of conditioning reliant on external pressures or external rewards for their continuance after the training ceases.

Courtesy concerns something more than a code of behavior. When a code of behavior tries to stand in for the deeper qualities of the virtue, it is easy to tell that the deeper qualities of soul life have not been touched. A kind of overlay of proper actions can be perceived, while the depth of the persons practicing the code remains veiled. In a place of work, for example, you can readily tell when people have been instructed in how to behave. They all perform their instructions quite well, and an outer respect toward others is evident, but it has the quality of turning the people into abstract functionaries. A place of work where training into how to behave has occurred exudes a very eerie quality because the spirit of the people has often been effectively shut off, or only shows up in the tiniest of ways, through a mechanical-like covering. People of many races, sexes, backgrounds, and histories may seem to be working together wonderfully, but there is a plastic look about them, or they all

take on the "look" of the enterprise for which they work.

If we observe the ways in which something like the virtue of courtesy enters the world these days, it becomes evident that this virtue cannot be enacted in a collective way that has little or nothing to do with the individuality of the persons involved. Often, two layers of covering can be perceived; there is what might be called the corporate layer, where people take on the "look" of the enterprise they work for. Then, on top of this first collective layer, a second layer often consists of the evidence that the people have been through some abstract training concerning how to behave to stay within the bounds of the laws of the workplace. The perception of these coverings can be quite alarming, because often nothing can be seen beneath the surface of these imposed behaviors.

More and more frequently these days, we see the dire results of trying to live and work together in ways that bury the individual expressions of soul and spirit. When expressions of individuality are obscured, psychological pathologies are created. In their mildest form, the soul maladies are expressed as ongoing stress, gradually entering the body as diseases such as heart attack or ulcers or anxiety. In their strongest forms these pathologies are expressed as violence in the workplace—a person coming back after having given up his or her soul for a job for many years, and shooting everyone in sight, or threatening some kind of violence toward the impersonal nature of the workplace.

While these observations focus on the way in which a substitute for the virtue of courtesy is enacted in the world of work, it is not hard to see that a similar substitution goes on in many other aspects of daily life. Codes of conduct are enforced in schools, from kindergarten to college. In spite of laws, forms of courtesy in relation to driving are becoming more and more difficult to enforce. Codes of conduct also govern public gatherings such as city council meetings and community gatherings. Such codes, no matter where they are found, are important and necessary. The difficulty stems from the fact that, more and more, such outer codes have come to replace the individual virtue of courtesy. The lack of this virtue cannot be filled in by regulation, and as this substitution occurs, collective behavior replaces individual care.

A cynic might respond that it makes no difference whether good behavior toward others occurs as a matter of outer rules or inner desire; the result is, after all, the same—an orderly social realm. I have already given a picture above of how collective conformity differs in kind and essence from individual initiative. I have known several places of work, small to be sure, where courtesy rather than codes of behavior governed the interactions of the people. From on onlooker's point of view, such places look unruly and chaotic. Seen from within, however, as long as there was an ideal that the place stood for, people there were far more effective and creative than in a "socially governed" setting. Such places are the exception.

Organizations of every kind—from the large corporation to the nonprofit service organization—tend to fear individuality, and certainly will not let go or loosen their sense of the need for collective rules of conduct. Thus, I want to first give a phenomenological description of the virtue of courtesy, one that will bring out what this virtue brings into the world that can never be present through outer organization alone.

We do not act alone, and the spheres of our interactions with others often collide. Friction inevitably results, and often irritation and anger. Our individual purposes seldom, if ever, exactly match those of others, and we find ourselves at cross-purposes even when we seem to have the same ideals or the same goals, and even when we work together with others in order to be of service to the world. Is it not highly interesting that our first impulse is not to fall into line with each other and carry out our tasks? For such behavior to occur, to simply and spontaneously act cooperatively, whatever constitutes individuality would have to be forgotten or ignored. In contrast to the collective cooperation visible in creatures such as ants or bees, we quickly make a mess of cooperative action by asserting our uniqueness into whatever we do.

This characteristic individuality of expression, which constitutes an essential dimension of being human, does not have to do merely with egotism, getting what I want at the expense of others, though it can go in that direction quite easily. At a deeper level, what is being expressed is a living out of the problem of how we each can fulfill our individual

destiny in the midst of others who are trying to do the same, coupled with the fact that each person's destiny is unique. How can we do this together?

Courtesy enters when the plight of finding our destiny in the midst of others who are doing likewise can be felt. The virtue concerns recognizing and honoring something beyond someone else's egotism. When we are truly courteous and not just enacting a social habit, we are doing something more than stepping back so that the other person's ego can shine. What that "something more" consists of, however, has to be looked for; it is not immediately apparent. Actually, we have to develop a certain capacity for seeing this "something more" in advance of what and how the other person presents himself or herself. If I see others only in their most outer aspects, then I only see the ego dimension of the person. When I step back to give the ego dimension of the other person more room for self-display, this cannot be called courtesy.

Everything that was said earlier concerning rules of conduct concerns setting up the conditions under which people can work and be together in proximity and live in a social manner while at the same time have a healthy sense of the ego level of soul life. The regulated life allows for the multitudes to associate and receive a certain degree of consideration from each other. The regulated life allows us to perform our tasks with minimal hindrance; it, however, goes no deeper than ego and the recognition of ego-identity.

How does courtesy differ from mere good social conduct? The will to give others room has to originate freely from within our soul for an action to be one of courtesy. It is not something demanded or even expected. Courtesy goes beyond being a social form. We have the capacity to recognize the good in others, and it is this quality of the good that we honor in courtesy. The good that we recognize does not have anything to do with what the person has done. That kind of honor does not require very much in the way of perceptual capacities.

If one has done an honorable deed, is recognized for some accomplishment, or holds a station of honor, then courtesy takes place readily and easily. It is not quite so easy to approach a stranger on the street and

treat that person in the same manner as one would treat an honorable public figure. It is even more difficult to treat someone at work in this fashion when perhaps we feel in competition with that person, or feel irritated when we are forced to work together.

To honor someone, in effect, is to bow before that person. The word "courtesy" originated as a term describing proper behavior at court, before royalty. It was recognized that a person holding a position of royalty was an earthly representative of something larger, something of a divine nature. For a long time the royal person was considered divine. Later in history, the person was not considered divine, but the office was. To bow before the royal person was recognizing the holy office of that person. Now, in our time, to express courtesy toward another person requires recognizing the soul-being of the person. We step back, hold ourselves back, in order that the soul-being that is the other person be given room for expression. For the act to be the virtue of courtesy and not just an outward behavior, however, it is necessary that we be able to perceive the soul-being of the other person.

Stating the central concern for the starting place of courtesy as the capacity to recognize the soul-being of another person poses a certain difficulty concerning the nature of soul life. In the tradition of depth psychology, soul is considered only in its form as the factor in-forming individual existence. Indeed, this notion of soul—as a wholly individual factor of existence—can be found in every philosophy, from Plato through Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, on up to the present. Thus, the imagination of soul as wholly individual is very strong.

The study of the psyche—from which we get the word "psychology"—however, was not originally considered the center of the self, the center of personality. For example, in the *Iliad* of Homer, psyche (*psukhe*) meant "breath," which referred to life and to soul. The psyche was the soul *breathed into* the person by the life and love of others—by family, by tribe, and by those for whom the psyche was to be responsible, ultimately by the Spirit of the universe. This sense of the psyche is understood by Jung's psychology and its later developments in archetypal psychology as soul breathed into human beings by the gods. But

the early usage went further, and included other persons. Psyche was a gift from others. Only later did the psyche come to mean the center of the private personality.

The sense of our soul as being generated by others, and the soul of others being generated by the treating of them as soul presences, is central to the deepest sense of the virtue of courtesy. We cannot get to a soul sense of courtesy by starting with the imagination of the soul as private, unconnected with others. It is one's soul, when truly open to the other person, that breathes the life of soul into the other person. Soul is not self-generated, nor is soul wholly a generation of the gods, or in more modern psychological parlance, generated exclusively by the archetypes.

The metaphor that soul is "breathed" into others conveys the sense that our soul life is not self-generated. I do not make my own soul, nor do I activate my own soul. The inherent good of the other person brings out the soul-being that characterizes my individuality, and this is something we, in turn, do for others. The gift of soul occurs only through relationships that are open and loving. This gifting of soul, however, can be lost.

We can become utterly forgetful of this level of our existence and proceed in our relationships with each other without a semblance of soul. When we become forgetful of this level of existence as a culture, law and regulation have to then stand in for the respect that otherwise would be there on its own accord. We cannot restore this level of existence directly, because it is not under our direct control. We can, however, become aware of the conditions under which the soul life that is generated between ourselves and others takes place. Courtesy is one of these primary conditions.

As with all the virtues, it is important to imagine courtesy not as something added on in exterior fashion to who we are as human beings, but as a quality essential to being human in the first place. This imagination, this attitude of realizing there are qualities essential to our remaining human, is even more critical for courtesy than for the other virtues since it is so easy to take courtesy to be a bit of social refinement,

something that makes life more enjoyable, more bearable, and in the present world, something belonging to the elite. We have to first work to rid ourselves of this commonplace notion of courtesy.

The act of courtesy makes the space, the psychic room, for perception of the soul-being that is the other person, and simultaneously for the expression of soul-being by the other person. But what does this mean? Courtesy strives to keep conceptual understandings of the other person at bay. Typically, we do not see, are not truly present to others in their utter otherness. We perceive others through, by means of, conceptual understanding, though we are not aware of doing so.

We see someone as, for example, a teacher, or a mother, or a child, or a boss, a lover, a friend—any number of innumerable categories that bring some kind of order to our perceptions. This ordering, which occurs without our realizing it, hides, covers, veils the mystery that is the other person. This ordering gives us a sense of knowing the person, where knowing something about the person stands in as a substitute for knowing the person. Knowing the person directly and with immediacy, actually, is not possible—at least in the usual sense of what we mean by knowing. Actual knowing of the other person consists of coming into the ineffable space of mystery.

Initially, we can imagine courtesy in this way: we give the other person the space to be present as unknowable, uncomprehendable, uncontrollable, and unconsumable. We cannot approach the other person in this manner from the place of our ordinary ego consciousness. This consciousness immediately categorizes, seeks to seize a certain degree of control, a certain degree of power, and to retain self-identity. This last point is essential, for it suggests that if we are present to the essential unknowableness of the other person, we, at the same moment, cast ourselves into the same realm of being unknowable, even to ourselves.

This notion of entering into a relationship with another, in which the other is essentially unknowable and at the same time so are we, may seem a far cry from what we think of as ordinary acts of courtesy. To hold a door open for someone, to step back and let another speak instead of immediately stepping in to fill the space, to be, for a moment,

wholly oriented toward the other—all this seems to have very little to do with this deeper ground of the mystery of the other person. If these acts are carried out simply on the basis of having learned "good manners," then, certainly, the depth of experience possible in the act of courtesy is missed. If, though, in the midst of such simple acts, it is possible to let that split-second moment of doing something for another with kindness open up for us, then much more can be perceived as going on in the simplest of interactions.

The quality of courtesy, understood in this deep way as the perception of the mystery of the other person, in our time, seems wholly superfluous. In life determined by science, technology, functionality, and material objects, proceeding directly to the matter at hand seems primary. No time for qualities that seem to have no functional purpose. Time cannot be squandered basking in the mystery of others or of ourselves. No time for such luxury.

Courtesy cannot be argued for in terms of how it might benefit us. We are too skilled in knowing how to go about satisfying our own needs and comforts to relinquish these skills even a little to give honor to the soul-being of others when there is nothing in it for us. I do not mean or intend to put forth a cynical view, but simply want to keep in mind the actual circumstances of present cultural life and the enormity of what is being asked by even suggesting that courtesy requires putting our self-concerns aside. While there may be no benefit to us for attempting to hold back ourselves, there is, I believe, a basic and fundamental desire to do so, and this needs to be explored.

Courtesy celebrates the fundamental dignity of the person, of what it is to be a person. We defer our own affairs for a moment, not to dignify the affairs of the other person but to honor the person as a person. Courtesy operates, however, according to different laws than the laws of functional life. Courtesy takes detours, it squanders time, it lingers, it delays, it engages in the extravagant, the superfluous. Courtesy takes these detours because life itself, in its essence, consists of these seemingly extraneous qualities. Life never goes directly from A to B. Life itself is more like the movements of a ritual, an improvised ritual, where

each and every thing we do is highly meaningful, highly symbolic, but it may seem as if we are wandering around, lost.

Try to think, to imagine, how our soul-being must have a difficult time with existence in this world. For, after all, soul has its home in the spiritual world; there soul knows how to navigate, how to get around. Here, no matter how long soul has inhabited our body and the world, there must be a feeling of strangeness. When someone shows us the smallest act of courtesy, it is as if our soul, for a moment, feels relaxed, comforted, recognized as a spiritual being just a little bit lost; in fact, in this highly materialistic world, soul must be constantly confused. Courtesy says, even for just a moment, "I recognize who you are. Welcome to this world. I am deeply honored by your presence here. I thank you for your sacrifice of coming into the world. You bring a sense of the holy, which makes me feel whole and complete and reminds me that I too am a soul-being." This is courtesy as everyday reverence, as religion without walls.

Without everyday reverence, our democratic life in which everything has the quality of being basically the same as everything else is nothing more than imposed order holding back chaos, which tries to erupt every moment, to revolt in the wings. Remember the Greek tragedy, the *Bacchae* of Euripides. This play takes place in a world overcontrolled by structure. Pentheus, the king, is all order and structure, and the result of this overlay of rigidity is that Dionysus breaks through and demands to be honored. As levity, renewal, and regeneration have been kept out of the Saturnian order of doing things by the book, by the law, Dionysus returns with revenge, bringing violence, blood, and chaos. Life without the virtue of courtesy—courtesy felt in this deep manner and not just as a superficial, clean style of behavior existing at the same level of other functionality—becomes more and more structured, holding off the radical forces of renewal and regeneration.

Here, then, with the imagination of renewal and regeneration, we begin to have a sense of what the world of courtesy offers to us. What seems to be a deviation from getting on with things, with efficiency, productivity, and product, actually is what is most necessary for experi-

encing life in all its complexities and levels.

To understand the depth of courtesy, it is necessary to realize that this virtue, not unlike the other virtues, is not something that we bring preformed into situations and then put into operation. Because the nature of courtesy so vividly involves the presence of the other person, this virtue amplifies for us something concerning the essential character of all of the virtues—we develop them not as habits but rather as *capacities* of our being.

The difference between a capacity and a habit lies in the fact that the former exists only as a kind of schemata, an orientation, an open possibility, while the latter consists of a specified content. We can be taught the contents of manners—what to do in the presence of a lady, how to sit at a table, when to speak and not speak. These contents, when learned, form a habit of action that makes relationships take on a certain beauty. Courtesy does not consist of such predetermined contents we then bring to situations. We can develop a capacity for courtesy, which is the capacity to be present to, to face the ineffable otherness of, the other. When the mystery of the other person opens to us, courtesy is present. The forms that the virtue takes are not therefore predetermined but will be exactly right for the moment of such openings.

Here is an example. The other day I drove to town to go to the post office, which I often do. This day, however, the first real evidence of spring was showing. The sky was a pure, deep blue, a blue going into infinity. In early morning three large turkeys strutted in our front yard. When the largest of the birds walked in the sun, its feathers shimmered with copper. As soon as they left, a red fox appeared, repeatedly jumping for its tail, thinking, I suppose, that it was some other creature. A golden finch walked through the grass. All of this beauty was already in my imagination as I got to town. Walking up the steps of the post office, I breathed in the beauty of the day. An elderly man was coming out the front door, and out of habit I stepped back and held the door for him. He looked directly at me, right in the eyes, and said a simple, "Thank you." His manner of expression took me aback, made me present to the moment. It was not my holding the door for him that was the act of courtesy; it was his "thank you" that was courtesy in operation.

In that split second his "otherness" broke through, disassembling the imagination that I was living in, making it possible to experience, for a moment, the wonderful strangeness, not of the stranger, but of the soul-being that is this person. His ruddy face, his curly gray hair, his gentle, gruff manner, his blue eyes that were even deeper than the blue of the sky that day, still live on within me. Strange the effect of this person whom I do not know, but whom I met in a moment of *his* courtesy.

Is courtesy reserved for moments of intrusion into the ongoing functionality of our lives, or can this virtue be extended in time? Perhaps we should not be greedy, hoping for the possibility of living extended moments in the atmosphere of courtesy. On the other hand, the kind of instances we are most familiar with are perhaps no more than impressionistic scenes of a world we can enter more fully once we discover the discipline needed to keep the door open.

What, then, is the discipline or the practice of courtesy? It seems that it is a matter of becoming more and more able to be present to what is going on that is other than the immediate content of what is going on. I do not mean looking behind or beneath what happens, as if something is hidden that has to be exposed. This kind of imagination invites us to be interpreters of our daily relationships with others, which removes us even further from the immediacy of the moment. No, what goes on in the presence of another person besides the content is to be found right there, in the visible. But in order to find ourselves present beyond the content requires what at first may seem a rather strange, even disagreeable, attitude on our part. We must freely take up a radically receptive stance toward others—one in which, in effect, we become hostage to the other person.

We can be radically open to the other person only by forgetting ourselves, by giving ourselves over to the other person, but in a very particular way, a way in which by giving ourselves over we do not lose ourselves but find ourselves. I mean to imply this particular kind of giving over when suggesting the necessity of becoming hostage to the other person in an act of courtesy.

By losing ourselves, I in no way mean losing our consciousness. In fact, an intensification of consciousness occurs. I also do not mean becoming egoless. Rather, by becoming hostage to the other person, I mean that we come into radical proximity to the other person in the act of courtesy. In this position of radical proximity, the goodness of the other person calls out the act of courtesy in recognition of the goodness of this being. I do not think about it in advance. I do not self-generate the act; it is called out of me, but only under this condition of radical proximity. Of course, this kind of act can and does become schematized into language, concept, and formal behavior. Then, however, courtesy is on the way to becoming a habit and from there to being excluded altogether.

The key term to expand, and to try to describe something of its practice, is "radical proximity." We do not, in fact, go out of ourselves, leave ego behind, as it were, and find ourselves more or less merged with the other person. Radical proximity is where we are, how we are, the very activity of our soul-being in its usual and ordinary state. Radical proximity is the primary condition of being a soul-being in the world-with-others. It is not a matter of practicing radical proximity per se but rather practicing being present to this primary level of soul-being. To be in soul in the presence of others is courtesy.

The best access to the experience of radical proximity may be to engage in those formal acts of courtesy that take the form of good social manners. However, it is necessary to bring a new quality of consciousness to those acts. Think of these ordinary acts of courtesy as magical acts that make radical proximity appear, not as something we can know, but as a sensible, tangible reality, a bodily knowing occurring before the self-reflective act of knowing. The simple reality is that courtesy concerns some bodily action whose meaning lies completely in the action itself. The act of courtesy does not in itself intend to accomplish anything. In fact, it is an act that moves against the notion of accomplishing anything. Courtesy is not something that brings about an honoring of the other person; it is that honoring. So, it is only in the act itself that we can experience the radical proximity of the other; again, the act does not bring about this proximity, it exposes it.

The formal acts of courtesy, the good manners, which we can indeed practice and learn, can be thought of as the secondary act of courtesy, the outer motions, that can, if done in an attitude and an imagination of openness, expose the primary act of courtesy, a letting-be-present of the soul-being of the other in radical proximity with our own soul-being. What is exposed is not that there are two soul-beings, but rather that there are two beings-in-soul. The doing of courtesy and the receiving of courtesy are the two necessary polarities for exposing the most radical fact that soul is not first and foremost "in us" each individually, whole and complete, but that we both together are in-soul.

The act of courtesy exposes the scandal that soul is present only when two or more are together, really together, in radical proximity. It is a kind of scandal to recognize this ontological ground of soul. We are accustomed to holding the view that soul individualizes us, that it is the factor that makes us each uniquely who we are. To imagine that this sense of soul depends on the presence of others can appear scandalous. Are we not, potentially at least, whole and complete in ourselves? There is also a way in which soul is indeed individual, but this more commonplace sense of soul is "soul within soul." We have to exist with others, in soul, before we can experience the individuality of our soul. What has been described here as the act of courtesy is the soul that is necessary for individual soul.

A clear example of what I mean might be seen in the work of psychotherapy. If we put aside notions of problem-solving, or trying to get to the root of someone's problems, and look at the act of therapy itself, we have a good picture of courtesy extended in time. Through radical proximity with another person, being-in-soul is discovered, which leads to the possibility of coming to one's individual soul. It is interesting, indeed, to reframe psychotherapy, putting it under the rubric of courtesy.

If I am forever analyzing, it is impossible to engage in courtesy. On the way to courtesy—as, for example, with psychotherapy—it is quite possible to get stuck in analyzing. In daily life, this kind of intellectuality

takes other forms. In relation with others, for example, I might get stuck in wondering what is the right thing to do: should I do this for the other person, or should I do that? What would be the best thing?

I said above that courtesy concerned the little way. However, this little way has to be carried out with imagination; if it is not, little becomes literalized and falls into characteristics of fastidiousness and concern over detail. These are certainly positive characteristics, but only when accompanied by a sense of wholeness. Otherwise, courtesy becomes a plethora of empty manners, a concern for doing things right rather than doing things compassionately.

This smallest of virtues, courtesy, turns out to be the virtue that makes virtues a matter of communal soul concern. Without this virtue, the practice of all of the virtues would be oriented only toward one's individual soul development, having little to do with or concern for others. With the other virtues, there is indeed a strong sense of communal quality. When we do experience that communal quality, it is the reverberating of the radical nature of courtesy.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Virtue of Equanimity

What is it like to be perfectly balanced in the realm of emotions? Typically, our emotional responses are one-sided. We are either happy or sad, angry or glad, exuberant or withdrawn. When we are not bouncing between these polarities it is because emotion is hardly present at all. Equanimity does not mean absence of emotional quality. It does not mean feeling the same all the time, neither hot nor cold. Nor does equanimity mean a mixture of emotions from either side of the polarity—a little bit of anger mixed with just the right amount of love with a dash of joy thrown in for seasoning.

Equanimity also cannot be imagined as the point of balance between polarities that are established in advance. If something wonderful happens and we feel overjoyed, to find equanimity in our joy does not mean to balance this feeling with just the right amount of sadness, because we know that to let one emotion dominate would be a loss of equanimity. Such a view would require that we have within us a quantity of every emotion and that we could learn to draw upon the right one at just the moment needed to bring balance. To be able to draw up emotions in this manner would require taking a standpoint outside of our soul life, being detached observers of our own emotions, mixing them to the right proportions.

Many spiritual practices place equanimity at the top of the list of attributes necessary for spiritual development. These practices often speak of equanimity as if it is something that can be controlled through our will. It is spoken of as something that we can come to by