

This lesson may suggest a devious or greedy approach to life, but it is not what I have in mind. Anyone who attempts to maneuver others to their detriment has set himself against the divine currents of life and cannot thus long succeed. It is comparable to overloading an electrical circuit with too many appliances, in which case it is only a matter of time until there is a short circuit or blown fuse.

Life is set in the framework of human relations, and we are going to be forever working with people, like it or not; if we are wise we will learn to like it. You are always drawing something out of people--why not develop the skill to obtain the very best from them. In working with people, you will find that there are times when you are at your best, and there are likewise times when you are less than your best. You will notice this about others too. Fickle, changeable, temperamental are all attributes of human nature, and there is a need to find out why the fluctuation, why the high and low levels of performance. Find out what we are doing right and do more of it; find out what we are doing wrong and not do it anymore.

As far as others are concerned, we must admit that how they behave to us, what they do or do not do, what they say, how they act, has a great deal to do with how they respond to us. In other words, we may be more responsible than we know for how others are treating us. Since we are perpetually involved with people, we need people, and people need us. We must work with them, and our peace of mind requires loving and understanding and just treatment from them.

In order to get the most from all and at all times, here are ideas you will find helpful. First, believe in people. To do this is based on a trust in self. The one who is suspicious, critical of human nature, cynical, distrusting of those around him, is one who in all probability does not place great value on himself, does not have a high opinion of himself. Build a reserve of faith in people; look for the good performances of individuals, then generalize them. Affirm: "Aren't people wonderful!" Hold a fundamental belief in the divinity of man; keep on the bright side, and never generalize weakness. Remember that evil is simply the concealment of good. When faced with undesirable actions, do not let yourself say it just proves how depraved, or whatever, people are.

Man is a divine creature, and there is always a reserve of goodness within him, no matter who he is or what he does. Believe in it and keep your thoughts centered on it, even when you see darkness of human performance, in which case get to work to turn the lights on. Remember that everything in the universe is governed by law, and if you do not get along harmoniously with others, it is important for you to find out how to make the necessary adjustment. If light does not come on when you flick the switch, it is not the fault of electricity; rather, it is simply a matter of replacing the bulb or repairing the lamp. So, if you are not getting along with others, change your attitude toward them. If people do not cooperate, if they are not friendly, do not love you, are not buying the goods you are selling, don't seek a fault in them. If you get a right attitude toward them and toward all people, really believe in them, then they must respond properly, they must deliver. This is not to say that others do not have faults, but hold in your mind that you are not looking for faults; you are rather attempting to get the most good out of them, to relate beneficially to them. Do not constantly see faults, then complain that those you associate with are neither loving nor kind. Draw the best from people; it will make your role so much smoother and easier.

A second suggestion is to emulate the Hindus with the expression "Namaskar," I salute the divinity within you." This greeting has an almost magic power of evocation of one's essential divinity. If we were to use it habitually and with awareness of its spiritual meaning, it could aid us in remembering to deal with people as souls rather than as mere personalities. We might well acknowledge our own di-

vinity upon awakening each morning, then proceed to greet our family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues at work in the same fashion, "Namaskar!" It might take courage, innovations always do, but wouldn't it be fine to use this instead of a mere "Hello" or "Hi"? This would especially be appreciated by those who are aware of spiritual values. Correspondence, too, could be closed with this, and it might be a marvelous affirmation in place of counting to ten, whenever we are angry or impatient.

You see, saluting the divinity within another is actually a form of praise. How very effective praise is with children, especially. Never forget that when you sincerely praise someone, the most important thing to happen is that you raise your consciousness in dealing with him. Praise raises! Praise is important to all, hungering as we are for love, for appreciation, for acceptance. Everyone wants to be more, to do more, to have more, but so frequently there is an overwhelming sense of insecurity, and rightly-placed praise can open doors and lift terrible burdens. A great actress told me that she had declined to be lured into appearing in motion pictures in spite of the money she could have made because she needed the applause of a live audience in order to make her best performance, that that was the stimulus that activated her work. This may seem vain and trivial; however, it indicates a need we all have. Knowing this, we might paraphrase the Golden Rule: "What we like to have said to us, we should also say to others." This does not mean to resort to superficial flattery, which is frequently used to promote the interests of the one who uses it. When we center our attention on the divinity of man and think how wonderful people are, then we are meeting the individual out of the belief that he is really wonderful, deep within him, and we are trying to draw it out.

Another point..."Assume the virtue; act as if." Even the excellent, and popular, and widely-accepted theories of "winning friends and influencing people" are not completely workable unless we catch this concept. The child, for example, whose potential is ignored or slighted, remains where he is, or even slides backwards, but the one who is treated as if he is already what he should be, often makes startling progress toward what he can be. Treat people as if you considered them real, human, as if you expect their actions to be those of real people. In this way, you automatically draw out the best from them. As Goethe says, "When we take a man as he is we make him worse, but when we take a man as if he were already what he should be, then we advance him to what he can be."

Whatever human contact you are involved in, remind yourself how wonderful people are by saluting the divinity in a particular person or in all; then by resolving to treat the person as if this were already true, he holds marvelous qualities. You can get more from others by getting more from yourself, by thinking on a higher level, by dealing with people on the level of consciousness on which you actually believe that there is something within them far greater than that which they themselves know or have yet expressed. Yes, you can get the most from every person.