



BEING A HUMAN... that's enough

Module 1 Self-knowledge or Who am I?

The Handbook for the Programme Participants

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Modul 1 SELF-KNOWLEDGE or WHO AM I?

The Handbook for the Programme Participants

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“What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.”

Zig Ziglar

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“The greatness lies also in what you do not want, do not have, do not ask, what you are not and do not do.”

Karel Nešpor

MODULE 1 Self-knowledge or WHO AM I?

The self-knowledge is very important for the success in our life, for the choice of right job but also for the choice of the right life partner. Well, we are partners to ourselves for 24 hours a day and it's good when this partner is someone who is familiar to us, we understand him and he cannot surprise us so easily by his behaviour.

The fact, who we really are and how deep we realize it, makes our future. On the contrary the less we know ourselves the more difficult it's for us to use the potential that is hidden in us.

Perhaps we've got the tendency to consider ourselves for something mysterious what we must study and can't be affected from the outside. It's true that many of our characters and properties we got by conception, e.g. if we were born as a man or a woman, the colour of our eyes, our temperament.

However, many of things which say about our personality we influence by ourselves. The way we behave to ourselves, to the others, to the nature, that also says about who we are.

Have you decided to steal or to lie? Ok, but don't be angry if they call you a thief or a liar. Have you decided to sort waste or to forgive the wrong? By your actions you've become a conservationist and a merciful man.

Well, who are you?

We'll be glad if next lessons help you to look for the answers to question – “Who really am I?”. Not only in outside but also in your inside.

So let's do it!

LESSON 1.1 WHY IS IT THAT I AM JUST AS I AM?



To know myself. Although it sounds simple everyone, who started to do the selfknowledge, knows It 's a long long way.

Each of us is unique and unrepeatable. Our individuality develops according to these three factors¹:

1, inborn characteristics –they are given genetically, we got them already before our birth (e.g.: temperament, our physical constitution, some health restriction and so on).

2, environmental impact – the biggest influence to us is from our family, our friends, the people who we are in intensive touch, the environment we live in and also the fact, if we live in the war or peace, what the social and culture standards are in our lifetime and so on.

3, own decisions and actions – Last but not least, the formation of our personality is influenced by our own decisions, actions and their effects, e.g. what the living goals we have given, what a strong will we've made, what habits we've got, what values we've prepared, how we can use the opportunities that we have, how do we access obstacles and so on.

Which influences do dominate?

The influence of the genes is the most visible in early childhood. The heredity affects the fact if we were born as a man or a woman, if we've got blue or brown eyes, but also for example, if we are peaceful or explosive nature. Step by step the factors of our environment are becoming stronger—at the beginning it is mostly the parents and friends 'influence then the influence of peers and school becomes more important. Gradually by age we educate ourselves according to our own experiences, opinions and decisions. It is possible that someone can become a doctor although he si only mediumly intelligent and his hot temperament was often an obstruction for paying attention during his study and also the value of education at his family wasn't so big and his parents would like him more to be a motor mechanic.



To think about

We can't really change our inborn properties. We can change the environmental impact also only to some extent. But the third group – our decisions are fully in our power.

Lesson summary

These things make us unique:

- 1) *Inborn characteristics*
- 2) *Environmental impacts*
- 3) *Own decisions and actions.*

We can't really change inborn properties and we can also affect the environmental impacts only to some extent, but our decisions and actions are fully in our power.



LESSON 1.2 SOURCES OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE



When we do the self-knowledge we can use different helpful sources.

There are basic ones²:

- *self-reflection* (thinking about oneself, trying to understand oneself)
- *feedback from the other people* (receiving information from the others about how do they accept our behaviour and what feelings does our behaviour provoke to them)
- *diagnostics* (using different tests, questionnaires, examinations or techniques to assess human behaviour).

Self-reflection – thinking about oneself

In our self-knowledge we can get different forms of support from our environment but the most important feature is that we know ourselves. Thinking about ourselves is so important source of our self-knowledge. In self-reflection we think about ourselves, we try to understand ourselves. The self-reflection often takes place in our mind and in our internal dialogues with ourselves but also in dialogues with friends or a professional consultant. Also some forms of art (drawing, painting, dancing, music and so on) can be helpful for some people in their self-reflection.

The self-reflection can be oriented to what is happening in ourselves, how we work, what we feel and also to how we behave in relationships with people around us and our environment.

Feedback from other people

Also the feedback from the other people can help us in our self-knowledge. By using it we learn some information about us which we can compare with our self-image. We need to remember that the others judge us only according to our behaviour and actions. That's why opinions of the others are limited by the borders of our openness to them, by experiences, personal maturity or other different factors of interpersonal interaction. Also the same is true in the opposite direction - we can judge people only according to what they show us, how much we are personally mature, etc.

Diagnostics

We can learn different things about ourselves with diagnostic techniques. There are many psychodiagnostic tests which can measure our intelligence, attention, ability to withstand stress and react quickly. But we must take the results of these psychodiagnostic tests only as some indicators. The same, we must be also critical to the meaning of these results. If we take them very seriously, they can confuse us and send to a wrong way. It's known for example that the importance of the intelligence is very overrated and high score in the intelligence test needn't to affect our general skills or ability to be successful in the life.

In the self-knowledge we can use *methods of comparing with others*, too. This can on the one side help us to find more objective view at ourselves, but on the other side, it can destroy our inner satisfaction. Everybody is different and has some strengths and weaknesses. If the methods of comparing with the others are the main source of our self-knowledge, there is a big risk that we will see mainly their strength at the others. This way we could think that we are worse, more unwieldy or uglier than people around us, but it's neither true nor the meaning of the self-knowledge.

In the self-knowledge we must consider the environment, too – influence of the other people and human tendency to imitate, and also cultural impacts that make the overall social framework of our life and affect our current behaviour.



To think about – The Johari Window Model

We are going to think about the relationship between providing and receiving the feedback and reflection of one's own behaviour.

For this so-called The Johari Window scheme can be very helpful.

It's named after American psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham and it unifies our view at us with the view of other people.

We will show at this scheme how the others can be helpful in our self-knowledge.

The Johari Window scheme³

	KNOWN TO SELF	NOT KNOWN TO SELF
KNOWN TO OTHERS	ARENA – OPEN AREA	BLIND SPOT – BLIND AREA
NOT KNOWN TO OTHERS	FACADE – HIDDEN AREA	UNKNOWN – UNKNOWN AREA

Two columns represent “ME” (ourselves) and two lines represent “OTHER PEOPLE” - they can be mates, friends, family members, colleagues and so on. Relative size of individual “windows” changes depending on the quality of our relationship to the others (mutual trust, proximity, openness, etc.). Giving information about ourselves makes our hidden area smaller and open area bigger. By giving the feedback to us, the others extend our self-knowledge and that’s why our blind area is getting smaller. With these two process – the self-recognition and the feedback we make our unknown area smaller, too.

“Arena” – Open Area

There are things that are known to us and also seen by others. They include the information about our features, opinions, attitudes and behaviour which we know and we present them publicly and so the other people know about them, too. The size of this area is growing with the growing level of the mutual trust and the openness.

“Facade” – Hidden Area

Hidden area includes all information about ourselves which we don’t publicize and are kept unknown from others. These are mostly related to some negative aspects of us which we are not prepared or not willing to communicate with the other people – for example our unfulfilled desires, unrealized dreams, survived disappointments, unprocessed negative experiences, weaknesses, uncertainty and so on. The large area is a load for us, we can feel in danger that surrounding people will uncover our weaknesses. Reducing of the hidden area (its step by step uncovering) is connected with a risk and reliance to a correct approach of the others. That they won’t hurt us and will accept us with our weaknesses.

“Blind Spot” – Blind Area

Blind area contains the information which others know about us but we don't see them. Person sometimes sees himself distorted as if he had a blind spot in his point of view. Someone tends to overestimate, someone to underestimate, sometimes we don't see our behaviour, e.g. jumping into speech, unawares scraping in hair, etc. We can reach moving the information from the blind area to the open area by receiving the feedback from the other people.

“Unknown” – Unknown Area

In unknown area there are hidden aspects of ourself which neither we nor others know about. There is the information saved deeply in our subconscious that we can't remember yet and use them in our life. There can be the experiences from early childhood, suppressed themes and experiences which we've already displaced but they still affect our behaviour without our knowledge but also the features and the behaviour that haven't had an opportunity to express in any real situation.

Lesson Summary

The basic sources of the self-knowledge are:

- 1) *self-reflection*
- 2) *feedback from the other people*
- 3) *diagnostic*

The self-reflection can be oriented to what is happening inside us – what way we do, what we live and also how we behave to the others and to our surroundings.

During the feedback we learn what way the others see us. And received information we can compare with our self-picture.

With different diagnostics techniques we can learn about ourselves, e.g. the score of our intelligence quotient, the degree of openness to the others, etc. The results of these tests we should take only as the indicators.

LESSON 1.3 I AM JUST AS MY TEMPERAMENT IS



Our characteristics present longtime and stable figures of our personality. They perform in our thinking, living and behaviour. Some features we have all our life, we call them temperament – they are inherited, this means we were born with them and we can't change them much.

There belong⁴:

- 1) focusing of our personality on outside world - extroversion and its opposite introversion – focusing on own interior;
- 2) the pace of our thinking, behaviour and decision making (speed or slowness);
- 3) intensity of our emotional reactions, thus their strength or weakness;
- 4) variability of the survival, behaviour or thinking, it's our readiness to a change.

It is useful to find out what we are like, what our temperament is, in order to foresee in which situations we can successfully apply it and when it will complicate our life on the contrary. When we know our tendencies and inclinations, we will be able to reduce the manifestation of our temperament, to balance it or openly communicate to persons who are in contact with us. For example, we can freely say: "I can't retune so fast after the quarrel, I need more time."

What is my temperament?

There was Hippokrates already in Ancient Greece who was interesting in the question of temperament and he divided it into four groups to **choleric**, **phlegmatic**, **sanguine** and **melancholic**.

CHOLERIC – is characterized by short temper, spontaneity, openness. This fact sometimes makes the loss of the control over own emotions, impatience and lack of concentration in communication (especially in listening), jumping into speech, unilateral enforcement of own seeing of the world and problems, conflict readiness and sometimes also their direct incitement. After the ventilation of negative emotions or disagreement he can easily calm down with a tendency of cooperation and friendly approach.

PHLEGMATIC – is characterized by calm, his focusing on own interior world, little garrulity, slowness, reliability, relatively high stress tolerance. People with mostly phlegmatic temperament control their emotions largely, they avoid conflicts and don't want to join them. They prefer rut (although it can unfit), they can see a change as a danger. Some negative feelings often accumulate inside them and when they are drawn into some conflict they usually ventilate the large repertoire of problems from the past. After the conflict they usually don't calm but they continue to be angry and lock into oneself.

MELANCHOLIC – is characterized by a big sensitivity to all outside stimuli, the intensive inner survival, secretiveness, social shyness. This sometimes makes problems to succeed and to say 'no', avoiding the problems, a trend to confirm in the conflicts to the opinions and needs of the other people, not communicating about own problems and keeping them for themselves. On the other hand, the people with prevailing melancholic temperament can understand another person very good and they can empathize with his situation, they aren't self-centered but oriented to the needs of the other people, they help selflessly. They are the best listeners from the all temperament types in the communication because they are attentive, empathetic and understanding.

SANGUINE – They are usually active, dynamic, outspoken, creative and focused to the other people. The people with mainly sanguine temperament are motional types who don't like long sitting, passivity, waiting. They largely check thier emotions but on the other hand, if they need it, they can show them, too. They decide quickly and solve difficult living situations, sometimes at the expense of the optimal alternative. They are interested in many spheres, start many things but they often overestimate their possibilities and can't keep promises. These people don't avoid the conflicts but they often choose the compromise strategy, look for some unusual solutions. The change is not a danger for them sometimes they even search for it.

In the real life it is not likely that there is a person who is a hundred percent only one temperament. At most of us we can see all four temperaments but which are unevenly distributed. One temperament usually dominates and the other ones are complementary.



To think about

For the self-knowledge it is important to a man that he has an idea about the structure of his temperament, to learn reading of a different life situation which he gets into and to try to use that type of temperament which is optimal for the given situation.

Lesson Summary

Characters present longtime and stable features of our personality. Temperament characteristics are inherited, here belong:

- 1) focusing of our personality on outside world – *extroversion*, and its opposite *introversion* – focusing on own interior;
- 2) *the pace of our thinking, behaviour and decision making (speed or slowness)*;
- 3) *intensity of our emotional reactions, thus their strength or weakness*;
- 4) *variability of the survival, behaviour or thinking so our readiness to a change*.

Hippocrates divided the temperament into the four groups: *choleric, phlegmatic, sanguine and melancholic*.

At most of us we can see all four temperaments but which are unevenly distributed. One temperament usually dominates and the other ones are complementary.



LESSON 1.4 I AM JUST AS MY SKILLS ARE



From the features which man has we distinguish human skills. Every person has the set of the skills which combination makes us unique. Our skills are the preconditions for successful performing of certain activities.

Although the skills are based on genes for the most part they are developed by repeated action – training.

The skills which we are good at are our **strengths** and those ones we aren't so good at are our **weaknesses**.

Many of our strengths we can identify already in early childhood. If the parents are sensible they can help markedly to their children in finding and developing their strengths.

We are not quite young (so small), so it's up to us to realize our strengths on our own. This can help us to not to waste much time by doing things which we don't enjoy or we aren't good at.

And what if I don't have any skills?

It is very unlikely! Everyone has some skills he is good at and that in which he excels. The feeling that "I have no talent for anything" is there because we focus on skills which are modern e.g. talent for sport, music and so on. If I'm not the best in the talents that are "in", it doesn't mean that I don't have any skills in which I'm excellent at.

There are four helpful questions to find our strengths⁵:

1, What do I enjoy the most?

The answer includes all activities that we feel very good at and we have the greatest pleasure from. There are all activities in which we create something mentally or physically.

2, What am I a really good at?

If it is hard to answer this question, we can ask our parents, friends or someone who we trust for feedback. Also we can observe ourselves and write down everything what succeeds in and activities in that we are better than the others.

3, What does bring the inner satisfaction to me?

There are activities from the upper categories in which we experience the deep inner satisfaction (no matter if someone rewards us or not). These our strengths are strengthened with a special kind of the inner motivation.

4, How can I be the most useful to the world?

This question can help us the choice if we are the lucky ones who have many interests, skills and talents. The best internal filling we experience when we do what the world needs from us the most.



To think about

For planning our future there are our strengths that are more crucial for us. For general development however, it is good to work also on our weaknesses and make them into satisfactory level.

Lesson summary

Every person has the set of the skills which combination makes our unique. Although the skills are based in genes, for the most part they are developed by repeated actions – training.

The skills which we are good at are our *strengths* and those ones we aren't so good at are our *weaknesses*.

For planning our future there are our strengths that are more crucial for us. For general development however, it is good to work also on our weaknesses and make them into satisfactory level.

LESSON 1.5 I AM AS THE VALUES THAT I APPRECIATE



All our opinions, decisions and actions are affected in some way by our values. The values work inside us like the internal compass which guides all our actions. However, these values aren't properties of the things but they are the results of our relationships to them.

For example: the meat has really different value for “omnivore” than for “vegetarian”.

Similarly, if we feel that anybody doesn't esteem us, it doesn't mean that we don't have any value, it's only about how another person realizes our value.

Our values are usually linked together and make our **value orientation**. For this we can't extract and interpret the individual values because their sense depends on the other ones and the way they are linked together. They say, if we know the value system of a specific person, we gain not only the picture of his personality but we can greatly predict also his behaviour.

The goal values, which people care, include⁶:

Home and state safety (security)	A world of beauty (the beauty of nature, art)
Personal growth (possibility to learn, personal development)	Joy (happy peaceful life)
Equality (equal opportunity for all)	Self-respect (self-confidence)
Exciting life (active, encouraging)	Happiness (satisfaction)
Wisdom (a mature understanding of life)	Comfortable life (life in sufficiency)
Freedom (independence, personal choice)	A real friendship (a close relationship)
A sense of perfection (lasting benefits)	Spiritual values (an eternal life)
Mature love (sexual and spiritual affinity)	A world in peace (no wars or terrorism)
Inner harmony (no internal conflict)	Love for the others (self-sacrifice, work)
Family surety (take care of loved ones)	Social recognition (respect, admiration)



To think about

We must often decide between own priorities in our life. Therefore, it is good, time after time, to realize which values are important for us, to order them according to our priorities and also to follow them.

Lesson summary

All our opinions, decisions and actions are affected in some way by our values. However, these values aren't properties of the things but they are the results of our relationships to them.

Our values are usually linked together and make our *value orientation*.

We must often decide between own priorities in our life. Therefore, it is good, time after time, to realize which values are important for us, to order them according to our priorities and also to follow them.



LESSON 1.6 I AM AS THE PATTERNS THAT I CHOOSE



Have you ever thought about how people and surroundings which we live in affect us? What would we be like if we lived in different time or country? What relationship would we have to for example food, money, home if we lived during the war?

Or what would we be like if we were born in a different family, if we went to a different school or even class?

These factors and many others we can summarize into so called enviromental impacts. But what affects us the most are the people who surround us.

From the first minute of our life we have learned the most of things by imitating. Our surroundings influence us more than we usually admit. Even no book or study influence and re-form us as much as the people from our surroundings. Our relatives, known persons and friends affect us much more than we think and without we've realized it.

Try an experiment

Stand up on the desk. Then ask your weaker friend who stands in front of the desk to measure forces with you. Try to pull him on the desk while he is trying to pull you down. Who will win?

It is the physical law that is much simplier to pull down then pull up someone. You can't win by endurance. For the second person is enough to hang and wait untill your forces will exhaust.

Do you think there are also other things that work similarly in the life? If yes, what can you do with it?



To think about

People like to give advice so you will hear much of it yet in your life. Follow the advice of the people who achieve the things that you try to achieve.

Lesson summary

From the first minute of our life we learn most of things by imitating. Our surroundings influence us although we don't realize it.

What affects us the most are the people who surround us – our relatives, known persons, friends. Even no book or study influence and re-form us as much as the people from our surroundings.

To a large extent it is our decision about which people will influence us, who we meet with and whom we choose as our pattern.



LESSON 1.7 I AM JUST AS MY HABITS ARE



A habit is a tendency to do some activity by the specific way. For example, we have the habit of sorting waste, brushing our teeth after meal, greeting passing people and so on. Each of us has his own customs. Sometimes we don't realize it and do them automatically without thinking about it.

Simply, we do some actions because we have always done it so. Some of these habits are useful and we want to let them. But some of them we want to get rid of, those are mostly our bad habits. And what about you? Have you got any unusual habits? And what bad habits wouldn't you rather have?

The special kinds of habits

Some of our habits are culturally or historically conditioned, we call them traditions. Examples are the traditions at Easter, Christmas or New Year celebrations. There is also the special group of habits, so called rituals (ceremonies). They are social, spiritual and personal habits which have emotional dimension in addition, too. They help us to tune in to something (to prepare for something), to evoke emotions or to live emotions. For example: christening, graduation ceremony, wedding, funeral but the evening prayer, too and other.



To think about

You can hardly change anything in your life if you don't change yourself. We often do actions without realizing that we can do them differently.

Therefore, take the time and review your habits. Name them and think if you can change them in order they don't slow but help you.

Invite every habit to a talk, like a headteacher does with a naughty pupil who he/she isn't satisfied with, and suggest your imagine what way he can change himself. The habit by the habit. Our life is a whole consisting of small customs. Turn it into a change and put the life together according to your wishes.

Lesson summary

A habit is a tendency to do some activity by the specific way. Each of us has his own habits. Sometimes we don't realize it and do them automatically without thinking about it.

Some of these habits are useful and we want to let them. But some of them we want to get rid of, those are mostly our bad habits. We can change our habits, and we can change our bad habits for the useful ones.

The special types of habits include the traditions and rituals.



LESSON 1.8 I AM JUST AS MY INTERESTS ARE



Own personality we form also by the way which we spend our free time and what interests we have. Free time is the time when we don't have any work or other personal duties. We can spend it by yourself, according to own taste, hobbies.

Through our free time we gain mental and physical energy, we can self-realize, spend our time with family or friends. The way we spend our free time depends on several factors, for example: our temperament, our health, support of family background, our financial possibilities, etc.

If we have enough "sitting" at school, perhaps we prefer staying outdoors or sports activities. On the contrary, the people who work physically may prefer "more passive relax", as for example: rest at TV, reading a book, drawing, playing board games and so on.

Some people can't separate their work from leisure and they are willing to spend their free time at work. However, psychologists point to the necessity of having a rest and alternation of the activities. Without rest the distress accumulates and after time working output decreases. On the contrary, people who relax can focus on work better and they are more productive.

Personality verzus hobbies

Free time we can use also to our enrichment and personality development through the development of our interests. The hobbies are the voluntary activities in knowledge field, science, technic, culture, sport, collecting things, etc. The hobbies we can do in a group with people who have the same interests (e.g.: in a dance group, sport club or leisure centers and so on) or individually, too.

The interests are the part of our personality which we can influence the most. So they change and develop during our life. The hobbies can be amplified, shaded and created as a result of the deliberate action. Just for example, the perfect teacher at a drama class can inspire many young people who will be interested in the theater all their lives.

So it's easy to make – whether deliberately or accidentally – something we can call "uninterest" or disgusted activity. This usually happen when we are forced to some activity.



To think about

Our interests are often linked to our abilities. Also research proves that people develop interests in those areas which they are successful in.

It may happen that we can do some interests so professionally that they become a source of our income or personal fulfillment, or social prestige. The same, is that its development can help us in finding work.

Lesson summary

Own personality we form also by the way which we spend our free time and what interests we have. The hobbies are the voluntary activities in knowledge field, science, technic, culture, sport, collecting things, etc. The hobbies we can do in a group or individually.

The interests are the part of our personality which we can influence the most. So they change and develop during our life.

It may happen that we can do some interests so professionally that they become a source of our income or personal fulfillment, or social prestige.

LESSON 1.9 I AM WHO I CONSIDER TO BE



On the question: “Who am I?” you can answer: “I’m a young man,” so you admit that you belong to a young people group. Or: “I’m a daughter/son of my parents,” “I’m a Slovak,” and so on. It is not surprise that everyone has multiple identities.

We prefer certain identities to the others in individual situations. E.g. at school, my identity as a student is more than a national identity. On the contrary, when I stay abroad, my national identity may become more important.

Our identity is actually awareness of ourselves in the world (me as a part of this world) and together with the awareness of own uniqueness (although I’m a part of this world, I’m unique). As a unique person, I’ve got a name, I wear clothes, I behave, communicate in some way, etc.

Each of us is unique

The combination of our features, abilities, interests, values, experiences and environmental impacts, too, makes the unique person from everyone of us. Present and natural differences between people are the results of this own uniqueness.

The same as in painting, it is true that the original is the greatest price. So don’t be sad that you are not the same as the others. We were not born to be all the same neither to walk along the one road in the same way.

Let us be aware of our uniqueness and give our life the mission by which we will contribute to our world to be better and nicer place to live.



To think about

“To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Lesson summary

Each of us has multiple identities while we prefer certain identities to others in individual situations. Our identity is actually awareness of ourselves in the world - me as a part of this world and together with the awareness of own uniqueness - although I'm a part of this world, I'm unique.

It is the combination of our features, abilities, interests, values, experiences and environmental impacts, too, that makes the unique person from everyone of us.

Let us be aware of our uniqueness and give our life the mission by which we will contribute to our world to be better and nicer place to live.



MODULE 1 SUMMARY

Once a career adviser used a following comparison⁷:

“Imagine you before your coming to this world, your spirit was standing in front of the great Creator and volunteered to serve. Afterwards you chose in common the mission and gifts (features, skills, talent, etc.) which would be given to you after the birth. Your entrusted task, your mission isn’t a command for a slave who doesn’t think, but the task chosen in common.

The Creator said: “I wish ...” and you heart exclaimed: “This is the best!” because you felt that it was the right thing. But then we were born and in that moment we completely forgot why we were sent to those world...

And since then our life is about constant searching. The searching which will last as long as our memory comes back.”

(From the book of Richard N. Bolles: What Color Is Your Parachute?)

We have embarked on a journey of the selfknowledge which will last all our lifetime. This way will be full of our everyday decisions that will shape us. Wish we are satisfied with ourselves and our life we have lived at its end.



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