



BEING A HUMAN ... that's enough

Module 6 INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Handbook for the Programme Participants

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*“No man is an island,
Entire of itself.
Each is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thine own
Or of thine friends were.
Each man’s death diminishes me,
For I am involved in mankind.
Therefore, send not to know
For whom the bell tolls,
It tolls for thee.”*

Ernest Hemingway

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“To love means to forget oneself entirely for the sake of another.”

Michael Quist

MODULE 6 INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The basic principles of harmonious interpersonal relationships are love and respect. However, if we want to live a harmonious life, we need to have a loving approach not only to ourselves and our loved ones, but to everyone and we need to strive for the common good.

We all live together on our planet Earth. Contributing to the common good therefore includes also professing and protecting certain common values and acting according to them. Living in accordance with these values brings the need to care for the common areas of life.

Our task is therefore to develop not only literacy in writing, reading, financial management or digital literacy, but also “the value literacy”. That is, knowing what values and how we all need to protect.

In the first module of our programme we defined the values as the internal compass which affects all our opinions and actions in a certain way. We are different people and there are differences between us in what values we profess and what our value orientation is.

However, certain values should be common to all, because respecting them brings the well-being of the whole society, and conversely, acting or the lifestyle that is against them harms the whole society.

What does the respect mean? Which values are universal for all? Which areas of life should we all contribute together? We are also going to work with these topics in this module which is about interpersonal relationships.

LESSON 6.1 We Are All Connected



Many other people are parts of our stories every day.

In the morning we woke up in our bed which was made to order by the local carpenter George also with the desk. At that time, our parents had probably prepared breakfast for the table.

For fresh bread they went to a nearby bakery, where the assistant Katherine sold it to them. Mr. Thomas had been baking our favourite bread since the early morning. At breakfast we enjoyed the slice of bread with the juicy tomatoes which were grown on an organic farm in a side village.

After breakfast we went to school by bus. The bus driver David greeted us with a smile and took us safely to the given place. Then we slowly entered the modern school building that was built for us ten years ago by a large group of skilled masters: architects, builders, electricians, heating engineers, plumbers, painters... Our teacher Mary welcomed us in the classroom and she has been influenced and inspired by many other people on her career path - by her class teacher at primary school, a university professor and also by Mrs. Maria Montessori who is no longer alive. During our time together, we were drawing on the knowledge of our ancestors and contemporary scientists, too. Even we were going to visit together one meteorologist, Mr. Peter. And so we had experienced an interesting lesson about the weather.

On the way home, we stopped at the small gift shop, where we bought the painting for our grandmother from a local artist, for which we had been saving since we have learned that our grandmother liked it. We called by phone to our parents and agreed to meet them in the supermarket where we made shopping for the upcoming weekend and birthday party. During our visit of the shop, the assistant was filling the shell with candy boxes, the cleaner was cleaning the spilled milk, the store manager was completing the lost price tag and at the end of the purchase we were served by the cashier Elizabeth. At home, our favourite singer Sima was playing on the radio while taking out the shopping, and in preparation for our dinner we were grateful for all our food processors which helped us to prepare food in a short time. Maybe when we were using them, we remembered those skilled people who were behind their production and distribution to our home.

While thinking about how many people have become part of our story today, we realize that we are all connected ... we share our story directly or indirectly with members of our family, with people in our community, as well as with people around the global community.

The work and activity of individual people is the part of our lived stories. We can take all this for granted, or even look only for the mistakes at others ... But let's try to be more grateful for what the others are doing, let's be forgiving if something is not always according to our ideas. Let's remember, if we were like Robinson alone on the island and had to take care of everything ourselves, it wouldn't be without any mistakes either. Let's fulfil the work we do with love – let's love what we do and do what we love. Our mutual help, combined with kindness, will help us to build the human society on values that will turn our interpersonal relationships into a network of the love and respect.



To think about

Then a ploughman said:
Speak to us

of Work.

And he answered, saying:

You work that you may keep pace with the earth and the soul of the earth. For to be idle is to become a stranger unto the seasons, and to step out of life's procession, that marches in majesty and proud submission towards the infinite. When you work, you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music.

Which of you would be a reed, dumb and silent, when all else sings together in unison?

Always you have been told that work is a curse and labour a misfortune.

But I say to you that when you work you fulfil a part of the Earth's furthest dream, assigned to you when the dream was born.

And in keeping yourself with labour you are in truth loving life,

And to love life through labour is to be intimate with Life's inmost secret.

But if you in your pain call birth an affliction and the support of the flesh a curse written upon your brow, then I answer that naught but the sweat of your brow shall wash away that which is written.

You have been told also that life is darkness, and in your weariness you echo what was said by the weary.

And I say that life is indeed darkness save when there is urge,
 And all urge is blind save when there is knowledge,
 And all knowledge is vain save when there is work,
 And all work is empty save when there is love;
 And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one
 another, and to God.

And what is it to work with love?

It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, even as if your
 beloved were to wear that cloth.

It is to build a house with affection, even as if your beloved were to dwell in
 that house.

It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy, even as if your
 beloved were to eat the fruit.

It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit,

And to know that all the blessed dead are standing about you and watching.

Often have I heard you say, as if speaking in sleep, "He who works in marble, and
 finds the shape of his own soul in the stone, is nobler than he who ploughs the soil.
 And he who seizes the rainbow to lay it on a cloth in the likeness of man, is
 more than he who makes the sandals for our feet."

But I say, not in sleep but in the over wakefulness of noontide, that the wind
 speaks not more sweetly to the giant oaks than to the least of all the blades of grass;
 And he alone is great who turns the voice of the wind into a song made sweeter
 by his own loving.

Work is love made visible.

And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you
 should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those
 who work with joy.

For if you bake bread with indifference, you bake a bitter bread that feeds but
 half man's hunger.

And if you grudge the crushing of the grapes, your grudge distils a poison in the wine.

And if you sing though as angels, and love not the singing, you muffle man's
 ears to the voices of the day and the voices of the night.¹

Lesson summary

Many other people are parts of our stories every day. Let's try to be more grateful for what the others are doing and let's be forgiving if something is not always according to our ideas. Let's fulfil the work we do with love – let's love what we do and do what we love. Our mutual help, combined with kindness, will help us to build the human society on values that will turn our interpersonal relationships into a network of the love and respect.



LESSON 6.2 The Earth's Inhabitants



Who are the people that live on our Earth? Which continent is the most populous? What languages do the people of the Earth speak, what religions do they practise? Who are we as humanity and how do we share the knowledge and resources that we have at our disposal?

In his book, Mr. Smith tried to summarize basic information about the inhabitants of the Earth into an example of a village². What would the structure of the Earth's population look like if the Earth were the village with 100 inhabitants?

If the Earth were the village with 100 inhabitants, 61 of them would come from Asia. There are big countries as China, Japan, India, Russian, Pakistan and many others in Asia. Another 13 inhabitants of our village would be from Africa. 5 out of 100 inhabitants would be from North America. 8 people would come from Central and South America (collectively referred to as Latin America) and 12 would be from Europe. And don't forget 1 inhabitant from Australia and Oceania. This area includes Australia, New Zealand and all the other beautiful islands in the Pacific Ocean.

If the Earth were the village with 100 inhabitants, more than half of them would speak 1 of 8 languages. 22 people would speak one of the Chinese dialects, 9 people in the village would be the native speaker of English, 8 people in the village would speak Hindi (language in India), 7 people in the village would speak Spanish, 4 in Bengali and another 4 in Arabic. Then there would be 3 people who would speak Russian and 3 people who would speak Portuguese. If we spoke these 8 languages - Chinese, English, Hindi, Spanish, Bengali, Arabic, Russian and Portuguese, we could say "hello" to more than half of the people in our village.

If the Earth were the village with 100 inhabitants, many of them would be young. If we counted all the people under the age of 20, we would get the number 39. 42 people would be middle-aged (20 to 49 years old), 18 people in the village would be over 50 years old. Only 1 villager would be over 80 years old.

If the Earth were the village with 100 inhabitants, 32 of them would be Christians and 19 would be Muslims who go to pray in the mosque. Right next to the mosque there would be a Hindu temple visited by 13 Hindus.

12 villagers would believe in natural (traditional) religions such as animism and shamanism. Inside the Buddhist temple, 6 villagers would follow the Buddha's teachings. 1 villager would practise the Jewish religion (Judaism) and another 15 people would not practise any religion.

If the Earth were the village with 100 inhabitants, 38 school-age children would live in it ... But only 31 of them would really go to the school and learn to read and write. Other children would not have the school they could go to. Some children would have to work in the fields and factories instead of going to school in order to help their poor families. Many girls would be denied an education to stay at home and take care of the household. These 7 children would remain illiterate.

Only the richest 20 people in the village would have the remaining money left over after paying for basic necessities such as food and accommodation. Then they could buy also many other things. The 20 poorest villagers would own almost no property. They would hardly have enough money to survive. Only 24 people in the village would still have enough food. 16 people would sometimes go to sleep hungry. 34 people would be hungry most of the time and 26 people would be malnourished.

Much food in the village would come from animal breeding. The village would be home for 31 sheep and goats, 23 cows, bulls and oxen and 15 pigs. There would also be 3 camels in the village, that would help to transport goods to the furthest areas in the desert. There would also be 2 horses and 189 hens and chickens!

In most of the village, the air would be healthy and the water would be clean. If the Earth were the village with 100 inhabitants, 75 of them would have safe and clean water either right at home or near their home. The other 25 inhabitants would have to spend most of the day looking for safe drinking water. Mostly it would be the work of women and girls. 68 people in the village would breathe clean air and 32 people would breathe air that is harmful to health due to pollution (from transport, industry, etc.).

If the Earth were the village with 100 inhabitants, 76 of them would have electricity, which they would use mainly for lighting. But some of them would also have more luxurious things. There would be 42 radios and 24 televisions in the village, but they would not necessarily have to be in those 24 households. There would be only 10 computers in the village.

However, the inhabitants of the Earth are not the inhabitants of only one village. Our home is our whole Earth. With many languages, states, religions and more than 7 billion people. The world may seem crowded, but there is still enough place for each of us.



To think about

Probably most of us like chocolate. The magic berry that makes the chocolate taste so amazing is cocoa, which is grown mainly in West Africa. However, the life of cocoa growers is very difficult.

Although the demand for the goods is high, the price of cocoa beans has fallen in recent years. Cacao trees are damaged by climate change, too. Young people so often leave their family farms and seek their happiness in the cities instead. Nor the child labour on cocoa farms is uncommon.

But how does this affect us, lovers of delicious chocolate? It's up to us how we approach it. You may have heard of *fair trade*.

Fair Trade is a label for an alternative to the free market. It has arisen as a response to the hard conditions in which growers and producers in developing countries are forced to work and sell raw materials or other goods. A product or raw material with the Fair Trade logo guarantees to the consumer that human rights have not been suppressed at the time of its creation, there was no pollution or damage to nature, and growers and producers have been paid the salary for their work, which allows them developing and a certain standard of living (e.g. they can afford to send their children to school).

Therefore, if we are going to buy chocolate next time, we can decide for chocolate from fair trade, which is based on dialogue, transparency and respect. Promoting Fair Trade is just one way to contribute to the common good. It is important that, as far as possible, we engage in initiatives and activities to promote the alleviation of any common human problem. The loving and open heart will certainly find an opportunity to promote the common good or create it on the basis of seeing the needs of others.

Lesson summary

Our Earth is the land where many nationalities with different languages, ages, religions and social status live. Education, food or drinking water are not a matter of course for a large part of our planet's population. Let's try to be engaged in initiatives and activities to support the alleviation of any common human problems.



LESSON 6.3 Our Great-grandchildren



Many animal species have been able to survive in the past only thanks to their caring for their offspring. We, humans, also have a special relationship with our offspring. We try to make our children to be well, but at the same time we often forget about the children of our children and the next generations who will come after us. We often treat our environment as if nothing should come after us... We really plunder the resources of our Earth, we cut down forests that have been growing for several decades... and it is often just because we don't know that we have had enough.

At the same time, we do not even remember our great-grandchildren, who can no longer, even with the great effort, repair this damage done on our Earth. After all, if we remembered, would we be capable of these actions?

Every pollution and degradation of the environment (plants, soil, rivers, air), deforestation, increasing of waste and problems in their disposal, acid rain, global warming These affect the quality of life for all of us, and threaten millions of people around the world, as well as those who will come after us.

We all live together on our planet. It is the very important value to preserve resources and life on our planet not only for ourselves but also for the future generations. We call this environmental sustainability. We must strive for this with our attitudes and actions.

Therefore, another type of literacy that we should learn and master from our childhood is the environmental literacy. This includes the respect for nature and the understanding of its processes, as well as conscious environmentally friendly behaviour resulting from this knowledge.



To think about

A healthy environment is essential for the survival of the present and future generations. Our lifestyle therefore needs to be adapted to protect this value.

The very obvious patterns of action that we should have internalized in all our activities are: to protect and restore the nature, to save all the resources we have – water, air and electricity, to use ecological energy sources (solar energy, wind energy, etc.), to use green fuels, to reduce the use of private transport and prefer the public transport, to support walking and riding the scooter or bike.

Also to reduce waste production, to sort waste, to use recycled materials. It is crucial to know the problems of our environment, to look for the ways and to learn how we can contribute to their elimination, reduction, solution. The value of environmental protection must be proclaimed, spread to the future generations in education, but especially to behave and live according to it.³

Lesson summary

Every pollution and degradation of the environment affects the quality of life for all of us and threatens millions of people around the world, as well as those who will come after us. A healthy environment is essential for the survival of present and future generations. Our lifestyle therefore should contain the patterns which protect the nature and its resources. This environmental literacy we should pass on to our children and next generations.



LESSON 6.4 Everyone Has the Right to Its Own Story



Can you imagine the life in which the “chosen ones” would show us not only what we should say, but also what we should think? If the “chosen ones” dictated to us, what we could read and what we should not read. If everything that comes beyond the borders were censored. Does it seem like sci-fi? However, it is not so long ago that such practices were part of the management of people’s lives in our country.

The year 1989 represented not only a political takeover for our country, but also caused a change in the thinking of people in this country. We were given the opportunity to make free decisions, the opportunity to manage our own destinies independently.

Each of us has own story that he/she writes into the book of life day in day. The freedom, that our parents have fought for, respects our uniqueness and our right to determine our lives according to our opinions, values, priorities, needs and ideas of happiness.

However, freedom is directly linked to responsibility. It means that, together with our decisions, we must also be able to take the responsibility for them, regardless of whether our decisions turn out to be correct or not. Freedom respects our right to be wrong, to take the responsibility for our mistakes and to learn from them.

To show the respect to the other people means to accept that they have the same rights as us and when we come into a conflict with them, we consider their needs as legitimate as ours.

You shouldn’t also forget that even in a respectful approach, the rules of conduct have their place. However, it is also important how they are determined, how they are talked about and how to deal with their violation.

Why don’t we sometimes respect each other?⁴

Not respecting does not have to mean necessarily contempt or disrespect. When we say that some people do not respect us, we usually mean that they take steps that affect us without our agreeing or taking our wishes into account. The following situations can be given as examples: *When painting, the girl is spending all the white colour, without asking the others in the group if they will also need it.*

A group of students is listening to their favourite music out loud in the room in the afternoon during a ski training, while several tired classmates want to sleep in the next room.

The boy is staying outside on Saturday night for an unusually long time without telling his parents or calling them.

What is the reason that someone does not respect us in this way?

There can be several reasons.

1. The other person may not have an idea that his/her decision can touch us in some way or he/she only has forgotten to ask us, or couldn't make it.

2. Another case is that the person has "thought it over for us" and he/she supposes that we look at the situation like him/her if this person were in our place. People often have no idea (or do not understand) that we might have different needs and preferences than they would if they were in our place. For example, those students think that listening to their great music must be enjoyable for everyone.

3. Not respecting can be part of some "good intentions" and "good deeds". For example, a mother is throwing away the daughter's favourite cap and is buying another one which she considers better. Students (probably with good intentions) are encouraging a timid classmate to jump into a lake. Students: *"Jump, it's nothing, don't be scared!"* Classmate: *"Leave me, I don't want to jump!"* Students: *"Don't talk and jump! Everyone has already jumped!"*

4. The worse form of disrespect is when the other person knows or hears what we want and yet continues to do what hinders us. Sometimes the person can do so because of a lack of imagination, because he/she cannot empathize with the other or understand that this is something just annoying for the other.

Example: Majka: "Please don't put that sugar into the pastry, you know I'm fulfilling a sugar-free challenge." Granny: "Oh, come on! I'll just put a little bit in there. It wouldn't be good without it. Alena: "Don't kick into the grain, dust flies out of it and then I have an allergy." Rado and Robo: "Sure!" (And they continue kicking.)

5. Other times we are angry with someone and we don't respect them because we don't want to retreat them.

Example: Anna: "Do not shout at me!" Zuzka: "I'll shout at whoever I want!"

6. A special kind of disrespect is negating the other and what he says. The non-respecting person thus puts himself in the role of the one who knows better than the other what the other feels or needs.

The other is excluded from the discussion because, for example, he/she is crazy, has no reason, is hysterical, hypersensitive, hypochondriac, simulant, liar or he/she just doesn't know what's good for him/her.

Tono: "Pa'lo, come on, come play!" Pa'lo: "I can't, my knee hurts." Tono: "Come on, you, sensitive woman, no excuses!"

Hana: "I suggest we come together and everyone say what bothers them."

Martin: "Hey, what are you playing at!"



To think about

In the past, the human life of an ordinary man was in the hands of his ruler. If, by chance, the ruler did not like something about this ordinary man, he could behead him instead of inviting him to discuss.

It was not until the end of the 18th century that France enacted the supreme power of the law, which meant that the king could rule only through the law, and only in the name of the law he could demand obedience from people. Declaring freedom and equality before the law for all people from the birth was a big change for the feudal division of people so far.

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is the first international document to protect human rights, such as equality of people, religious freedom, wage for work, the right to rest, the right to free basic education. The Declaration affirms the irrevocability and inalienability of the rights of all members of human society and serves as a model for the creation of legal norms for the protection of human rights in individual states.

Since then, a lot of time has passed and the fundamental human rights have been declared in a number of important documents. And although the human rights are universal and apply to everyone, people have realized that some individuals need special guarantees and support in fulfilling their rights.

So, in 1959, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted. It is a set of the principles, following which should help children survive a happy childhood. Later, in 2006, for example, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted. This contributes to the promotion of human rights and freedoms for all persons with disabilities. And we could go on and on...

The realisation of fundamental human rights is the value which we must protect together. Our universal basic human rights are adapted in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, which is hierarchically the highest legislation valid in the Slovak Republic. At the same time, the human rights of the individual can only be fulfilled if we can take the responsibility for each other and for the environment in which we live.

The development of society is also known by how it treats its weakest elements - its members who need protection and the special care. However, if we overlook the disrespect of the others' rights, it can very easily happen that we cannot find help and support when once our rights are violated.

Lesson summary

We live in the country where we have the opportunity to make free decisions, to manage our own destinies independently. This is not a matter of course for all people. The realisation of fundamental human rights is the value that we must protect together.

The human rights of the individual can only be fulfilled if we can take the responsibility for each other and for the environment in which we live. The development of society is also known by how it treats its weakest elements – its members who need protection and the special care. However, if we overlook the disrespect of the others' rights, it can very easily happen, that we will not find help and support when once our rights are violated.

LESSON 6.5 Joyful Learning



Education has been one of the important values of human society since long ago. The people who had good knowledge led the others. The others respected them because their livelihood or survival depended on their wise decision.

Quality knowledge was carefully guarded and first it was passed on to the next generation orally. Books have been of immense value in the past because it took months and years to rewrite them. With the invention of book printing, knowledge began to spread throughout the world, and the books as the tool for spreading the knowledge have become increasingly available to the general public.

Slovakia is one of the countries where people have free access to education. Education is the unique value, which brings the development of almost all basic values - the truth, freedom, a human life. The education moves us closer to the truth, gives us more freedom and develops our personality. The love and the education are two important values that will remain here for us in our children.

The competencies that the inhabitants of this planet will need for years to come are still the same as we have needed as humans for the centuries: to be creative, inventive, practical, persistent, selfless, to remain a personality and at the same time, to be able to coexist and work with others, to be prepared for changes, shocks and the crisis, but also not to lose curiosity, to look for the answers to your questions and at the same time to study their truthfulness, to have the courage to dream and desire, and especially - to find your place in the world, to use your abilities and talents, to understand why I am here and why the world needs me.⁵

The time has come for us to begin to appreciate and protect the value of quality education. We need the education in which children are being taught to learn to think and not just memorize lessons, definitions ... We need schools that will accept our right to make mistakes and errors, and the ones which will contribute to experiencing the joy of learning that is inherent in every child from the birth.



To think about

What is my relationship to the education? Do I consider it an important value in my life?

The English Varkey Foundation recognizes that the lack of education is a major factor in the social, political, economic and health problems facing the world today. Therefore, it implements and supports a number of educational programs that contribute to the reduction of poverty, prejudice and conflict. This foundation awards annually “Global Teacher Prize” – the prize for the best teacher worth \$ 1,000,000. In 2019, the prize was awarded to the teacher of mathematics and science at a secondary school in the remote semi-desert region of Kenya (Africa), the minor, Peter Tabichi.

The children, who attend the school in which he teaches, have very difficult educational conditions. They travel 7 kilometres a day on difficult roads to get to school. There are 58 children per teacher in this school. The teacher has a single computer with an unstable internet connection. Despite these conditions, these children are able to prepare for international competitions and achieve excellent results⁶.

Lesson summary

Education has been one of the important values of human society since long ago. The education moves us closer to the truth, gives us more freedom and develops our personality and the competencies necessary for life. Free and available education is not a matter of course for all children around the world. It is good to appreciate this value and to contribute to the building of schools and the education system, which teaches children to think and support the joy of learning. The love and the education are two important values that will remain here for us in our children.

LESSON 6.6 The 21st Century Generation



Most scientists consider the discovery of the structure of DNA, by Watson and Crick in 1953, to be the most significant discovery of the century (and some of them also the discovery of millennium). Through this discovery, humanity has learned how genes multiply, how they work, and what they are composed of.

Less than half a century later, scientists have announced to the world that they have just "roughly read" human hereditary information. The research aimed at determining the differences in the hereditary information of individual people gradually brings us interesting results.

We are genetically homogeneous because we come from the "African Eve". Individual people differ genetically from each other slightly, most of us are at 99.9% identical. If we look at our hereditary information, we find that we have the same genes as the ancient Greeks. Even like our predecessors who hunted mammoths and considered the Sun as the God. *We differ in culture, not in genes.*⁷

The Culture of the 21st Century People

Culture is an expression of a complex of specific spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society, which includes, together with art and literature, a common way of life, lifestyle, value system, traditions and faith. How would we like the generations, that come after us, to remember our culture - the people of the 21st century?

- ? Do we want to be remembered as those who destroyed their planet for their own selfishness, even though they had all the information about the devastating impact of their actions?
- ? Do we want us to remain in the history of mankind as those who have destroyed their social ties in a competitive struggle and have exchanged the respect and love for our neighbours for a pile of "modern achievements" that prevent them from seeing the essence of their being?
- ? Do we want to be remembered as hypocrites who could not give up their "high standard of living" even though they had mouths full of environmental speeches and phrases about the hope of a better tomorrow?

Of course, none of us wants that.

Let us contribute therefore with our lives to being a generation of love:

- love for oneself, neighbours and the whole human community;
- love of nature and all living things which we share our planet with;
- love of true wisdom that opens hearts.

Let us show this love with our thoughts, words and deeds. Day after day ...



To think about

The little girl was dying of the illness from which her eight-year-old brother had just recovered. The doctor told the boy: “Only the transfusion of your blood can save your little sister. Are you willing to give her your blood?”

The boy's eyes widened in fear. He hesitated for a moment, but finally said: “All right, Doctor. I will do it.”

An hour after the transfusion, the boy asked the doctor a little uncertainly: “And when will I die?”

Only then the doctor understood what the fear that the boy could not hide from the procedure meant: he thought that when he would give his blood to his sister, he would give her also his life.⁸

Lesson summary

Individual people differ genetically from each other slightly. If we look at our hereditary information, we find that we have the same genes as the ancient Greeks. Even like our predecessors who hunted mammoths and considered the Sun as the God. We differ from previous generations in culture, not in genes.

Let us strive to contribute with our thoughts, behaviour, and actions so that we will be the generation of love for ourselves, our neighbours and the whole human community, for the nature and all the living beings which we share our planet with, as well as to the truth and wisdom that opens hearts.

MODULE 6 SUMMARY

In a roundtable debate, Brazilian theologian Leonard Boffa asked Tibetan Dalai Lama: *“Your Holiness, which religion is the best of all?”*

Leonard remembers this situation vividly: *“I thought he would say Tibetan Buddhism or Eastern religions which are much older than Christianity. However, the Dalai Lama paused, looked in my eyes, and smiled. It surprised me.”*

Dalai Lama answered: *“The best religion is one that will make you a better person.”*

Leonard was embarrassed by this answer and asked: *“And what makes me better?”*

Dalai Lama answered: *“Whatever that will make you more compassionate, sensitive, objective, loving, human, responsible, ethical. The religion that can do this is the best for you. It is important how you treat your family, your friends, how you behave at work, in society, in front of the world. Remember, the universe is an echo of your actions and thoughts. The law of action and reaction does not only apply to physics. It also applies to all relationships - to people, animals, plants, the world. If I behave well, I will get back good. If I do evil, evil will return to me. Remember, the universe is an echo of your actions and thoughts.”⁹*

Love and respect for the others force us to shift our sight from ourselves to our loved ones and to all mankind.

The suffering of people who are not our family, or our closest neighbours or the inhabitants of our country, affects us in the same way as if we or our loved ones were confronted by it. This view is not short-sighted one. It also sees the needs of future generations and teaches us to live in belonging, responsibility to others, and to the planet that is our home.

NOTES

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