

#5 Learned Skills

We are born with the seeds of virtue. It is our destiny to sprout, bear fruit and spread these positive qualities. But these human skills need to be nurtured to grow. Even with years of formal education, we seldom receive adequate instruction in how to develop virtues. Human interactions in relationships are the ideal place to sharpen one's skills.

The quest for love and friendship is a quest for virtues.

Virtues and friendships take time to nurture and grow. Watching little children, you can see which skills are germinating and which virtues have yet to break ground. By the time we are teenagers, our skills become better defined. I have several friends in their twenties who have already begun to master a wide range of virtues. With each passing decade, more individuals possess the amount of virtues necessary to form kindred spirit relationships.

It is one thing to read about a virtue such as kindness, or to witness someone being kind to another. However, the best way to learn a virtue is to first receive and experience it directly. Once you've experienced kindness directly, you're better able to give kindness. And when you are kind to someone, you witness the positive effect your kindness has on the other person and you experience feeling good.

Our minds expand when special electrochemical energy is transmitted through them by thinking new thoughts. Similarly, when we consciously decide to engage our will to be good, we integrate the emotional right and the rational left cerebral hemispheres of our brains. Unexplored parts of the brain grow, links form, bridges and neuro-pathways develop as we aspire to be virtuous.

Virtues form the basis of our self-esteem and determine the quality of all of our intimate relationships. These life skills enrich the effectiveness of our professional associations as well. Being virtuous increases the possibility that we will experience the virtue of others.

Virtues exemplify our attraction to the creative force for good. We begin our quest by seeking the best in ourselves, then bring out the finest in others.