

## VIRTUES ALWAYS TRAVEL IN PAIRS

The concept that virtues always travel in pairs is a unique idea that has been conceived out of our work over many years. We discussed the concept of pairing the virtues in the handout *Virtue or Vice?* In this document we're looking at the notion of pairing in a slightly different way as we're illustrating how one virtue, when practised, will evolve into another. This dimension does not in any way dilute the original concept that virtues applied on their own often become vices.

We have concluded that the idea that virtues always travel in pairs is a principle that stands up to scrutiny based on our tens of thousands of hours of clinical practice, various research and through the close examination of the ancient philosophies of Greece, India, China and the Middle East. If one were to take the time to study many of the philosophical texts that have come out of the ancient world, rather than discovering glaring differences, one would be surprised to see how much those texts have in common. Sadly, we have made too much of the differences, and failed to see the common elements that bind human experience and understanding. It is in the discovery of the countless similarities that we find that truth is indeed a universal language.

Virtues are only divine forces when they are matched appropriately to the individual, context and situation. This is why we say they always travel in pairs. Below we have tried to illustrate the evolutionary connection between virtues. This is not a definitive list, but it gives some idea of the concept. This document is an attempt to show how a single virtue, when practised repeatedly, will eventually reach the highest form of that virtue. En route it will form several relationships with other virtues before fully blossoming into the best expression of itself.

The virtue listed in the first part of each of the sentences below is the one that needs to be practised; it's the starting point which could be best described as one's intention. It is the point of origin of the journey and with consistent application that virtue will eventually lead to its most evolved form, which is illustrated at the end of each sentence. The virtues listed on the right could be described as the fruits of one's practice, patience and perseverance (see *The Three 'P's*). Let us contemplate the relationships between virtues further....

Acceptance leads to.... contentment.

Discipline leads to.... freedom.

Practice leads to.... personal power.

Honesty leads to.... truth.

Courage leads to.... fearlessness.

Faith leads to.... certainty.

Happiness leads to.... inner harmony.

Peace leads to.... clarity.

Kindness leads to.... benevolence.

Listening leads to.... discrimination.

Introspection leads to.... realisation.

Gratitude leads to.... bliss.

Reflection leads to.... insight.

Optimism leads to.... joy.

Determination leads to.... success.

Patience leads to.... wisdom.

Self-respect leads to.... humility.

Order leads to.... peace of mind.

Gentleness leads to.... strength.

Love leads to.... all of the virtues....

The more that we practise a particular virtue, the more we will find we become that virtue. In fact, we become greater than the virtue we're practising; we become everything that virtue promises us and more. In the examples listed above we can see that as we practise a particular virtue it grows and evolves and becomes a more refined virtue. The individual moves from the position of practice and becomes the embodiment of the virtue. When we embody something, it has, in fact, become our nature. This is where practice does indeed become permanent! What we practise, we eventually become. And so, if you want to change your reality and improve your sense of self then practising the virtues of your choice is a good place to start. If you take any one of these virtues and apply it consistently and appropriately, you will find that you start to make positive changes in your attitude and outlook relatively quickly. It's such a nice feeling as you grow and move towards all you're capable of being.

Starting from today, make a pledge that you will practise applying virtues in pairs in your life, being mindful of what you're thinking, saying and doing. Treat each moment and every situation as an opportunity to apply this wonderful principle. To best understand which virtues are needed in each moment, pause and apply the principles of The Three Gatekeepers (see handout of same name). This will help you to make the best choices from moment to moment. The pairings discussed here will keep your heart and mind focused on the eventual destination of continued practice. This is a very simple concept, but it has amazing subtlety and depth, so study it carefully to ensure you understand how best to apply it in your life. We're sure you will then experience for yourself that virtues do indeed always travel in pairs.