

# **The Four Levels of Happiness**

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## **Introduction**

Aristotle noted at the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that happiness is the one thing you can choose for itself — everything else is chosen for the sake of happiness.<sup>1</sup> If Aristotle is correct, this one concept, “happiness,” is at the root of every decision we make and every action we perform, and therefore it determines whether we think our lives have meaning, whether we are going somewhere, whether we are successful, whether we are worth something (to ourselves), whether life is lived to the full, and whether life is worth living. Inasmuch as this concept can influence our whole identity and purpose in life, it will probably influence the kinds of friends we make, the person we want to marry, the career we pursue, the clubs to which we belong, the associations with which we affiliate, and just about everything else of relevance.

If we can discover a good and comprehensive definition of happiness, then we are very likely to live a more fulfilled life in the areas of our relationships, careers, associations, lives in the workplace, in the community, in our churches, and even in culture or society. Such a fulfilled life could do considerable good — for individuals as well as the common good, for this world and even the next.

### **I.**

#### **A General Definition of Happiness**

Perhaps the most general definition of happiness is, “the fulfillment of desire” (whether that desire be superficial or sublime). It follows from this that unhappiness would be the nonfulfillment of desire. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to discover what our major desires are – what drives us; what we yearn for; what we seek for satisfaction and fulfillment.

Throughout the centuries philosophers (and later psychologists) have elucidated four major kinds of desire (and therefore four major kinds of happiness). At least three of these four kinds of desire/happiness are addressed by thinkers as diverse as Plato<sup>2</sup> and Aristotle<sup>3</sup>; Catholic existential philosophers such as Max Scheler<sup>4</sup> and Gabriel Marcel<sup>5</sup>, Protestant philosophers such

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<sup>1</sup> See Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* Book One.

<sup>2</sup> See Plato 1991. *The Republic of Plato* trans. by Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books) Books VI and VII. See also 1956. *The Symposium* trans. by Benjamin Jowette (New York: Pearson Publications).

<sup>3</sup> See Aristotle 1999. *Nicomachean Ethics* trans. by Terence Irwin (New York: Hackett Publications) Book I.

<sup>4</sup> See Max Scheler 1960. *On the Eternal in Man* trans. by Bernard Noble (London: SCM Press). See also 1987. *Person and Self-Value: Three Essays* ed. and trans. by Manfred S. Frings (Boston: Nijhoff Press).

as Soren Kierkegaard<sup>6</sup> and Karl Jaspers<sup>7</sup>; Jewish philosophers such as Martin Buber<sup>8</sup> and Abraham Heschel<sup>9</sup>, contemporary neo-Thomist philosophers such as Jacques Maritain<sup>10</sup>, Josef Pieper<sup>11</sup>, and Bernard Lonergan,<sup>12</sup> phenomenologists such as Edith Stein<sup>13</sup> and Simone Weil<sup>14</sup>; moral psychologists such as Lawrence Kohlberg<sup>15</sup> and Carol Gilligan<sup>16</sup>; Abraham Maslow (the psychologist behind the need hierarchy),<sup>17</sup> Martin Seligman (the founder of the school of positive psychology)<sup>18</sup>; the developmental psychologists Erik Erikson,<sup>19</sup> and theologians such as St. Augustine,<sup>20</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas,<sup>21</sup> St. Teresa of Avila<sup>22</sup>, James Fowler,<sup>23</sup> and many others.

## II. Four Kinds of Desire

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<sup>5</sup> See Gabriel Marcel 2001. *The Mystery of Being (Vol.1): Reflection and Mystery* trans. by G.S. Fraser (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press). See also 2001. *The Mystery of Being (Vol.2): Faith & Reality* trans. by Rene Hague (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press). See also 2002. *Creative Fidelity* trans. by Robert Rosthal (New York: Fordham University Press).

<sup>6</sup> See Soren Kierkegaard 1987. *Either/Or* trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press). See also 1988. *Stages on Life's Way* trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press). See also 1941. *Concluding Unscientific Post Script* trans by David Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

<sup>7</sup> See Karl Jasper 2003. *Way to Wisdom: An Introduction to Philosophy* trans. by Ralph Manheim (New York: Yale University Press). See also 1971. *Philosophy of Existence* trans. by Richard Grabau (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press).

<sup>8</sup> See Martin Buber 2010. *I and Thou* (Eastford Connecticut: Martino Publications).

<sup>9</sup> See Abraham Heschel 1976. *Man is Not Alone: Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

<sup>10</sup> See Jacques Maritain 1974. *Integral Humanism* trans. by J. W. Evans (Southbend, IN: Notre Dame University Press).

<sup>11</sup> See Jose Pieper 1958. *Happiness and Contemplation* trans. by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Pantheon Publications). See also 1952. *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press).

<sup>12</sup> See Bernard Lonergan 1992. *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding in Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (Vol.3)* ed. by Frederick Crowe and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press) Ch.20.

<sup>13</sup> See Edith Stein 2002. *Finite and Eternal Being* trans. by Kurt Reinhardt (Washington, DC: Institute for Carmelite Studies Publications).

<sup>14</sup> See Simone Weil 1978. *Lectures on Philosophy* trans. by H. Price (Cambridge University Press).

<sup>15</sup> See Lawrence Kohlberg 1981. *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice* (New York: Harper & Row). See also 1984. *The Psychology of Moral Development: The Nature and Validity of Moral Stages* (New York: Harper & Row).

<sup>16</sup> See Carol Gilligan 1989. *Mapping the Moral Domain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

<sup>17</sup> See Abraham Maslow 1943. "A Theory of Human Motivation" in *Psychological Review* Vol. 50 #4, pp. 370-396. See also 1997. *Motivation and Personality* (London: Pearson Publishing Company).

<sup>18</sup> See Martin Seligman 2004. *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment* (New York: Atria Books/Simon & Schuster).

<sup>19</sup> See Erik Erikson 1994. *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company).

<sup>20</sup> See St. Augustine 1998. *The Confessions* trans. by Maria Boulding (New York: Vintage Publications).

<sup>21</sup> See St. Thomas Aquinas 1981. *Summa Theologica (Vol. II)* trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics) Part I-II, Questions 1-5.

<sup>22</sup> See St. Teresa of Avila 1980. *Interior Castle* (Washington, DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies Publications). See also 1976 *Autobiography in The Collected Works of St. Teresa Avila (Vol. 1)* trans. by Kieran Kavanaugh (Washington, DC: Institute for Carmelite Studies Publications).

<sup>23</sup> See James Fowler 1995. *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers).

So what are these four kinds of desire which give rise to four kinds of happiness?

1. Desires connected with biological (instinctual) opportunities and dangers
2. Ego-comparative desires
3. Contributive-empathetic desires
4. Transcendental-spiritual desires

These four kinds of desire/happiness come from the following faculties (internal powers or capabilities) within us:

1. The brain, nervous system, and sensory faculties (giving rise to the first kind of desire).
2. Self-consciousness (giving rise to the second kind of desire).
3. Empathy, conscience, and self-consciousness (giving rise to the third kind of desire).
4. Transcendental awareness (giving rise to the fourth kind of desire).

It is not my objective to explain these faculties in great detail here; however, a brief explanation of them in relationship to the four kinds of desire/happiness is essential.<sup>24</sup>

## **II. A.**

### **The First Kind of Desire-Happiness: External-Pleasure-Material**

*The brain, nervous system, and sensory faculties* give rise to the desires connected with *biological* opportunities and dangers. Thousands of volumes have been devoted to showing how the brain and sensory faculties in both humans and other animals are connected with a set of biological instincts necessary for survival and propagation of the species. Evidently, these instincts are connected with the acquisition of food, water, and shelter. They are also connected with herd and pack behaviors, procreation, and in mammals, affection. They also give rise to warnings about dangers linked to the sensorial world (predators and poisonous foods, etc.). Interestingly, animals seem to be limited to these biological opportunities and dangers, but human beings are not. As Bernard Lonergan points out:

[I]t is only when [animals'] functioning is disturbed that they enter into consciousness. Indeed, not only is a large part of animal living non-conscious, but the conscious part itself is intermittent. Animals sleep. It is as though the full-time business of living called forth consciousness as a part-time employee, occasionally to meet problems of

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<sup>24</sup> A more detailed explanation of the four kinds of desire and the internal faculties and capacities associated with them may be found in Robert Spitzer 2015, *Finding True Happiness: Satisfying Our Restless Hearts* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), Ch. 1.

malfunctioning, but regularly to deal rapidly, effectively, and economically with the external situations in which sustenance is to be won and into which offspring are to be born...When the object fails to stimulate, the subject is indifferent; and when non-conscious vital process has no need of outer objects, the subject dozes and falls asleep.<sup>25</sup>

Put simply, if a higher vertebrae, such as a dog or monkey, is not presented with either biological opportunities or dangers—that is, if there is no opportunity for food, shelter, affection or procreation and there are no threats to survival, it will find a comfortable spot and fall asleep. Human beings do not do this. When we run out of biological opportunities and dangers, our minds become engaged with thoughts about the other three kinds of desire — ego-comparative, contributive, and transcendent (explained below).

Can human beings become focused on the first kind of desire-happiness (and push the other three kinds into a subordinate position)? Evidently we can. We can become fixated by food, drink, cigars, and virtually any physical stimulus. We can also become engrossed in material things — clothes, houses, cars, jewelry, and of course, money. Though the latter group may start out as fulfilling needs of material comfort and pleasure, they can also fulfill the second kind of desire-happiness (ego-comparative happiness) as explained below. Some people will fixate on the first kind of happiness throughout their lives, but this is unusual. Most will move to the second kind of happiness, and then to the third or fourth kinds.

## II.B

### The Second Kind of Desire-Happiness: Ego-Comparative

*Self-consciousness* gives rise to ego-comparative desires. It is also connected with contributive desires in conjunction with empathy and conscience. I will explain each of these kinds of desire after a brief examination of self-consciousness.<sup>26</sup> In brief, self-consciousness refers to the human ability to be aware of awareness. We are not only aware of, say, this paper in front of us, but we are simultaneously aware of being *aware* of it. If we want, we can actually be aware of being aware of our awareness! It seems as if we can double back on ourselves like a dog attempting to catch its tail, except the analogy goes further -- like a dog swallowing its entire self – and even swallowing itself swallowing itself. This is exceedingly difficult to explain in the categories of macroscopic physics (and may even be inexplicable in terms of quantum physics<sup>27</sup>).

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<sup>25</sup> Bernard Lonergan, 1992. *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Vol.3) ed. by Fredrick Crowe and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).

<sup>26</sup> An extensive explanation of self-consciousness may be found in Robert Spitzer “The Human Mystery: Artificial, Animal, and Human Intelligence.” *Journal of Ultimate Reality and Meaning* (Vol. 33), nos. 1- 2. See also Robert Spitzer 2015 *The Soul’s Upward Yearning: Clues to our Transcendent Nature from Experience and Reason* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), Ch. 6.

<sup>27</sup> This problem is recognized by David Chalmers who calls it “the hard problem of consciousness.” Instead of speaking about this problem as one of self-awareness, he calls it a problem of “experience,” implying that human beings uniquely experience themselves experiencing—an activity that cannot be fully explained by physical

Some philosophers (most notably phenomenologists) try to explain this as a kind of self-transparency – where one can be present to oneself both as the thinking subject and as the object of thought at the same time. Again this is difficult, if not impossible, to explain in both macroscopic and quantum physics.<sup>28</sup> For the moment, we will have to put these interesting inquiries aside, and focus on the desires arising out of self-consciousness.

So what happens when human beings are conscious of their consciousness (capture themselves capturing themselves)? They can form their own private internal world – and even their own inner universe. This has the remarkable effect of juxtaposing “one’s inner world” with “the outer world.” As Jean Piaget indicates, children’s sense of the ego world (the inner world) is so dominant at first that they actually believe that it is at the center of reality and that everything in the outer world is subject to it. For example, they will think that the sun is following *them*. This absolutizing of the ego world is so natural that it requires interaction with other human beings (mostly parents) to enable them to discover perspectives different from their own. This reveals the presence and independence of other ego worlds as well as the independence of the outer world of non-human objects. The child soon learns that the outer world is really a shared world that is not subject to them, but rather maintains itself over against their and their parents’ ego worlds.<sup>29</sup> Once this lesson is learned, children can go in one of two directions. They can either try to bring the outer world (and other persons’ ego worlds) under their control and dominion (ego-comparative desires) or they can give their inner world over to the outer world (and others’ ego worlds) to help and enhance them (contributive-empathetic desires). Ego-comparative desires can occur through self-consciousness alone, but contributive-empathetic desires require the help of empathy and conscience.

When self-consciousness is left to itself, it naturally tends toward ego-comparative desires. Most parents will recognize this natural tendency in their young children – they not only have a strong sense of independence, but they can exert it forcefully over against their parents with a resounding “no!” It does not take long for the child to learn that such expressions exert control over (and produce frustration in) their parents. Slowly but surely children also figure out how to manipulate their parents – to set one parent over against the other, or to use some of the parents’

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processes. See David Chalmers 1995 “Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 2 (3): pp 200-219. See also David Chalmers 1997, *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory*. (London: Oxford University Press). I have given a summary of Chalmers’ “hard problem” and a defense of it in Robert Spitzer 2015, *The Soul’s Upward Yearning: Clues to our Transcendent Nature from Experience and Reason* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), pp. 216-227.

<sup>28</sup> The essential problem is that the same act of consciousness (or experiencing) must be in two relative positions with respect to itself simultaneously. This eludes current quantum mechanical explanations. See also Robert Spitzer 2015, *The Soul’s Upward Yearning: Clues to our Transcendent Nature from Experience and Reason* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), pp. 236-239.

<sup>29</sup> See Jean Piaget 1977 in *The Essential Piaget*. ed. by Howard E. Gruber and J. Jacques Voneche (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), p. 137. See also Jean Piaget 1930. *The Child’s Conception of Physical Causality*. (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company).

desires as leverage to get something that parents initially might not want to give. As most parents know, if they give way to manipulation too much, children will simply take over the household.

This natural tendency does not stop with childhood. When children reach adolescence, they become hyper aware of other children, and that they are in competition with those children on many different levels. This is not limited to winning or losing on the playground field, but extends to achievement, popularity, status, beauty, intelligence, perceived intelligence, control, power, and every other form of honor or prestige. As children progress through grade school their worlds become blanketed with a myriad of ego comparisons – who’s achieving more or less? Who’s smarter or not so smart? Who’s beautiful and who’s ugly? Who does better in school and who does not? Who is better in sports and who is not? Who’s winning and who’s losing? Who’s more popular and less popular? Who is admired and who is not? Who’s favored by the teacher and who’s not? Who’s favored on the playground and who’s not?

Now recall for a moment what was said above. When our desires are fulfilled, we experience feelings of satisfaction – happiness, but when they are not fulfilled, we experience dissatisfaction – unhappiness. As we shall see below, older children in adolescence who mistakenly think that ego-comparative happiness is the *only* kind of happiness will encounter grave challenges and problems which I term “the comparison game disaster.”) But I am getting ahead of myself here, for my sole purpose is to briefly describe the four kinds of desire and their associated forms of happiness. I explain the comparison game in another article (Go to the free article—“[Escaping Your Personal Hell](#)”). For the moment, suffice it to say that our remarkable capacity for self-awareness allows us to create our own private inner world (ego world) which has a natural tendency toward self-centeredness. This tendency in turn motivates us to bring the outer world (including other human beings) under our influence and even our dominion. It also plunges us into a world of ego comparison, seeking advantage in the areas of status, popularity, achievement, intelligence, athletics, beauty, control, power, and every other domain of comparison. Left to itself, it can create an existential crisis in our lives.

## II.C

### **The Third Kind of Desire-Happiness: Contributive-Empathetic**

As noted above, contributive-empathetic desire arises in part out of our self-consciousness; for just as I may desire to bring things under the influence of my inner world, so also I can desire to invest my inner world in the outer world to help and enhance it – even to the point of great self-sacrifice.

*Empathy.* In addition to self-consciousness, human beings have a very powerful capacity for empathy. It seems as if we make a connection with other human beings simply because we

recognize their value *in and for themselves*. We can simply catch a glimpse of other's eyes (the windows to their soul) and not only respond positively to them but actually allow them to affect us. If they respond in kind to us, we interact with each other sympathetically. Children do this naturally – so much so that they will talk to complete strangers, trust them, and do things for them without question. This drive is so powerful that we have to train children not to be *too* empathetic, and more cautious in today's society.

Empathy (in-feeling; in Greek, *en-pathos*; in German, *ein-Fühlung*) begins with a deep awareness of and connection to the other as both given and uniquely good. When one allows this awareness of and connection to the other to affect one, it produces an acceptance of the other and a consequent unity of feeling with the other, which opens upon an identification with the other tantamount to a sympathetic vibration. Though this unity with the feelings and being of another does not cause a loss of one's self or self-consciousness, it does cause a break in the radical autonomy arising out of focusing on oneself. Were it not for the capacity to be radically open to the unique goodness of the other, human beings might be inexorably caught up in egocentricity and radical autonomy. However, empathy does not allow self-consciousness to become radically autonomous; it presents the possibility of relational personhood whenever one chooses to accept one's "unity of feeling with the other," and to identify with the being of the other.<sup>30</sup>

In sum, empathy (the radical openness to the goodness of the other) opens the way to sympathy for the other (when one accepts this openness) giving rise to a sympathetic feeling which at first creates *care about* the other, and then, if these feelings are accepted more deeply, *care for* the other. This *care for* the other produces a unity with the other whereby doing the good for the other is just as easy, if not easier, than doing the good for oneself. This bond not only breaks through the drive toward egocentricity and autonomy, but also creates the condition for generous and even self-sacrificial love. This powerful drive and capacity forms the basis for the third kind of desire (the contributive desire to make a positive difference to someone or something *beyond* oneself), but it is not the only capacity involved in this desire.

*Conscience.* Philosophers have long recognized that conscience is one of the most important human faculties. It is generally viewed as an inner attraction to and love of goodness-justice, and an inner shunning and fear of evil-injustice. Our love of the good leads to the feelings of nobility and fulfillment when we do the good while our shunning and fear of evil leads to feelings of guilt and alienation when we do evil. Thus this two-sided inner sense causes not only feelings, but a sense of our inner self before and after we do good or evil. We love and are drawn to the good before we do it and we feel noble and at home within ourselves after we do it. Conversely we are repulsed and fear evil before we do it and guilty and alienated after we do it.

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<sup>30</sup> See Edith Stein 1989. *On the Problem of Empathy*. trans. by Waltraut Stein (Washington, DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies Publications).

Yet these are not the only effects of conscience. Philosophers have also recognized that conscience has intellectual content (what is generally referred to as the “practical intellect”) enabling us to judge actions as good-just or evil-unjust. There is disagreement among philosophers about how much of this content is part of our natural awareness and how much is learned. Aristotle for example believed that *some* human beings could know a *considerable amount* of ethical content by nature.<sup>31</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas held that the vast majority of people know *general* precepts by nature, but must be taught more specific precepts. General precepts include do good, avoid evil, do not kill an innocent, do not unnecessarily injure another, steal from another, or otherwise unnecessarily harm another, give a person their just deserts, be truthful to yourself and others.<sup>32</sup>

Most of the above precepts come under the rubric of the silver rule: “do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you,” which might be rephrased as “do not do a harm to others that you do not want done to you.” This is the minimal standard of justice upon which all other ethical precepts are based. The vast majority of us seem to know and believe that we cannot expect others to avoid harming us if we do not refrain from harming them. This belief is so powerful and convincing that it leads the vast majority of people to accede to law and to be law-abiding citizens. Those who do not feel obligated by this principle are deemed to be criminals or sociopaths.<sup>33</sup>

Most children are aware of and believe in this minimal sense of justice (fairness) by nature. Many philosophers, including Plato,<sup>34</sup> Aquinas,<sup>35</sup> and Kant<sup>36</sup>, do not think that this basic sense of

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<sup>31</sup> See for example, Aristotle “...but one must be born with an eye, as it were, by which to judge rightly and choose what is truly good, and he is well endowed *by nature* who is well endowed with this. For it is what is greatest and most noble, and what *we cannot get or learn from another*, but must have just such as it was when given us at birth, and to be well and nobly endowed with this will be perfect and true excellence of natural endowment. Aristotle 1942. *Nicomachean Ethics*. trans. by W.D. Ross in *The Student’s Oxford Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1114b5-10. Italics mine.

<sup>32</sup> “...[I]t is fitting that we have bestowed on us *by nature* not only speculative principles but also practical principles...[T]he first practical principles bestowed on us by nature, do not belong to a special power but too a special *natural* habit, which we call *synderesis*. Thus *synderesis* is said to incite to good and to murmur at evil, inasmuch as we proceed from first principles to discover and judge of what we have discovered.” St. Thomas Aquinas 1947. *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Vol.1). trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benzinger Brothers, Inc.), p. 407 (Pt 1, Q. 79, Art 12).

<sup>33</sup> “[a sociopath is] a person with a psychopathic personality whose behavior is antisocial, often criminal, and who lacks a sense of moral responsibility or social conscience.” URL: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/sociopath>. This definition is corroborated by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. See American Psychiatric Association 1994. “Antisocial personality disorder” in *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association).

<sup>34</sup> In a famous passage in *The Meno* (sections 90-96) Plato argues that if virtue can be taught, why can’t truly virtuous men teach their children virtue. He cites five examples of outstanding men in Athens whose children turned out to be “less than virtuous.” This indicated for Plato that there must be something about virtue with which people are endowed by nature.

<sup>35</sup> See the above quotation. *Summa Theologica*. Pt 1, Q. 79, Art 12.

<sup>36</sup> Immanuel Kant believed that human beings have a *natural* awareness of the highest good as an absolute duty (categorical imperative), and even uses this as a basis for our *natural* knowledge of God: Through the idea of the



and attraction to justice can be taught. If it is not present in children *by nature*, they will be incapable of feeling an inherent responsibility to moral precepts, leaving them open to sociopathic behavior. Fortunately, the vast majority of children are not sociopaths, and among those who do show tendencies toward sociopathic behavior, the majority of cases are not genetically caused but rather caused by environmental conditions (mostly due to severe neglect by parents) or severe trauma in early childhood.<sup>37</sup> Evidently, these environmental and traumatic causes of sociopathic behavior presume that the affected children had a *natural* capacity for conscience and empathy, but lost it because of these circumstances.

In view of this, it should not be surprising that virtually every culture and religion around the world adheres to the silver rule and the common general precepts derived from it. Indeed, in European common law a distinction is made between precepts which are *malum in se* (evil in themselves) versus those which are *malum prohibitum* (evil because they are prohibited by positive law). Ignorance is no excuse for violating the law in cases of precepts which are *malum in se*, but it can be for precepts that are *malum prohibitum*. Our common law expects that we will know by nature that certain behaviors are evil in themselves.

In view of the seeming agreement among philosophers, psychologists, and the common law, it is reasonable to hold that people by nature have a conscience which attracts them to the good, repulses them from evil, and informs them about general precepts derived from the most basic form of justice expressed in the silver rule. It can be undermined by severe parental neglect and trauma in children and voluntarily undermined by those wishing to pursue a life of injustice and crime. However, for many people, this natural capacity is valued, fostered, and trained, and it (along with empathy) becomes the foundation for human civility, common law, and social order.

*The Contributive-Emathetic Desire.* So what does this discussion of empathy and conscience have to do with our third kind of desire-happiness (the desire to contribute to someone or something *beyond* ourselves)? We saw above that empathy breaks through the tendency toward egocentricity and autonomy (produced by self-consciousness) through a natural attraction toward other human beings, and if deeply acknowledged can lead to sympathy, care, and even self-sacrifice for others. We also saw that conscience can break through egocentricity and autonomy through a natural attraction to justice (and a natural revulsion to injustice-evil),

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supreme good as object and final end of the pure practical reason the moral law leads to religion, that is, to the recognition of all duties as divine commands, not as sanctions, that is, as arbitrary commands of an alien will which are contingent in themselves, but as essential laws of every free will in itself, which, however, must be looked on as commands of the supreme Being, because it is only from a morally perfect (holy and good) and at the same time all-powerful will, and consequently only through harmony with this will, that we can hope to attain the highest good, which the moral law makes it our duty to take as the object of our endeavour.” Immanuel Kant 2004. *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*. trans. by T.K. Abbott (New York: Barnes & Noble), p.233.

<sup>37</sup> See American Psychiatric Association 1994. “Antisocial Personality Disorder” in *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association).

and that this could lead to high degrees of virtue and the common good. Empathy and conscience can work in two ways. They can prevent us from doing something negative but they can also inspire us to move toward great heights of positivity. So for example, empathy for someone might prevent a person from being insensitive or cruel, but it does not stop there. If we allow our empathy to reach us on the deepest level, it can also inspire us to do good for that person—far beyond avoiding harm. Thus, empathy can inspire generosity, self-sacrifice and altruism. Similarly, conscience can prevent a person from committing injustice by initiating feelings of self-alienation, revulsion and guilt, but it need not stop there. It can also inspire feelings of nobility and fulfillment when we act for justice and the common good. There does not seem to be any intrinsic limit to the altruistic feeling inspired by empathy or the feelings of nobility inspired by conscience, and for this reason, people who follow these inspirations tend to be heroically generous and idealistic.

We might think for a moment that such generosity and idealism is beyond the ordinary person, but it really is not, because all of us want our lives to be significant in some way. If we follow the inspiration of empathy and conscience we find ourselves wanting the world to be better off for our having lived. In fact, we cannot stand the thought that our lives did not make a difference to the world. Nobody wants to get to 70 years old and ask, “What was the difference between the value of my life and the value of a rock?” and have to say, “Not much.” If we did not contribute much to anyone or anything beyond ourselves, we would probably be in a state of meaninglessness, emptiness, and incipient despair. We will explain this in greater detail when discussing the “comparison game” below.

We not only seek to have *some* positive meaning in our lives—*some* way in which we made the world better off for our having lived, our capacity for empathy and conscience inspires us to make as much positive difference as we can before we leave this earth. Making the world better for our having lived can become addictive because it produces its own kind of happiness. This kind of happiness does not feel the same as a good bowl of pasta (the first kind of happiness) or getting a standing ovation or a promotion (the second kind of happiness), but it does bring a sense of purpose which is both inspiring and enjoyable. After a while we begin to think about how much more we can do, and perhaps the kind of legacy we want to leave, and this gives us an even greater sense of purpose and inspiration.

When we accentuate the third kind of desire-happiness, our outlook and viewpoint begin to shift. Instead of looking for opportunities to gain material wealth, pleasure, or ego-comparative advantage, we begin to *naturally* seek opportunities to make a positive difference to the people around us – either through doing or “being with.” We seek these opportunities for our families, friends, organizations, stakeholders within our organizations, communities, churches, and even for the culture, society, and the Kingdom of God. At this juncture we become very efficient in our use of time, learning how we can still take care of the first and second kinds of happiness

(which have their proper place) while seeking optimal opportunities for the third kind of happiness.

## II.D

### **The Fourth Kind of Desire-Happiness: Transcendental Happiness**

There are many indications of our transcendent nature which I have explained extensively in several books and articles. Four of these indicators are explained briefly below: Rudolf Otto's numinous experience, Mircea Eliade's awareness of the sacred, Carl Jung's archetypal myth and symbols and our five transcendental desires.

Four of these indicators are explained in other works:

i. *Evidence of a transphysical soul capable of surviving bodily death from medical studies of near death experiences.* After bodily death, self-conscious persons leave their physical bodies and are still capable of seeing, hearing, remembering, and recalling. They are not subject to physical laws such as mass density (e.g., capable of moving through walls) and gravity (e.g., can move upward by merely thinking it). They retain their identities and memories from their former physical life. Frequently they are taken to a "heavenly domain" in which they encounter a loving white light, deceased relatives and friends, and Jesus. For a summary of the verifiable evidence of this phenomenon from major medical studies—go to the "[Science, Medicine, Near Death Experiences](#)".

ii. *Evidence of trans-algorithmic mathematical thought from Gödel's proof.* The great German mathematician, Kurt Gödel, showed that human beings can transcend any and all algorithms, rules, and axioms in the formation of new mathematical constructs. This means human intelligence is beyond any form of artificial intelligence, and that human beings grasp mathematical intelligibility as a whole—revealing an innate (unlearned) awareness of mathematical intelligibility transcending the domain of finite structure and algorithmic expression. For an explanation of the proof and its implications, see Spitzer 2015, *The Soul's Upward Yearning*—Chapter Three (Section V.D).

iii. *David Chalmers "hard problem of consciousness."* Chalmers shows that the experience of human beings is distinct from that of animals, and that it cannot be explained by physical processes. When humans experience, they simultaneously experience themselves experiencing which implies that human consciousness can be in two relative positions with respect to itself simultaneously. For an explanation of this, see Spitzer 2015, *The Soul's Upward Yearning*—Chapter Six (Section II).

iv. *Evidence from our innate awareness of heuristic notions (transmaterial constructs necessary for asking questions and forming conceptual ideas).* Plato, Aquinas, Kant, and many others recognized that we could not move from perceptual ideas to conceptual ideas without an abstract organizing superstructure (heuristic notions). Without the ability to ask questions and form conceptual ideas we would not be capable of abstraction, syntax, and therefore, theoretical knowledge—we would be reduced to the merely perceptual concepts and language of

chimpanzees. For an explanation of this, see Spitzer 2015 *The Soul's Upward Yearning*—Chapter Three (Section VI).

The most obvious indication of our transcendent nature is our natural religious disposition. There is a preponderance of religious belief throughout the world (84% of the world population, according to the Pew Center's Landmark Study<sup>38</sup>). Most of us seem to be *naturally* religious – naturally reverent, naturally spiritual, naturally fascinated by the transcendent, and naturally moved to a profound sense of awe and glory. This provokes the question of whether this high propensity for religious affiliation arises out of what Freud would call “wishful thinking<sup>39</sup>” or something more fundamental which is independent of fear or wish fulfillment.

Freud's contention about the origin of religion has been seriously challenged by many psychoanalysts, philosophers, and scholars of religion throughout the last century. A detailed account is given in Spitzer 2015 *The Soul's Upward Yearning* (Chapters One and Two), but we will here give a brief summary of some pertinent data to show the reality of our personal transcendental nature.

Freud left out four major dimensions of human religious intuition and experience from his assessment of it in *Future of an Illusion*:

1. the numinous experience (Rudolf Otto),
2. the transcultural expression of the sacred (Mircea Eliade),
3. the unconscious archetypes of a spiritual struggle between good and evil (Carl Jung), and
4. five transcendental desires pointing to a transmateral dimension of human consciousness (Plato, Platonists, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Thomists).

I will give a brief explanation of each. Readers interested in a detailed account may refer to Spitzer 2015 *The Soul's Upward Yearning* (Chapters One and Two).

1. Rudolf Otto (d. 1937) was a scholar of comparative religions at the University of Marburg who wrote one of the most influential works on human spiritual and transcendent awareness – *The Idea of the Holy*.<sup>40</sup> Otto argued in that work that human beings, regardless of culture and formal religion, have a fundamental and irreducible sense of the holy – what he termed “the numinous experience” -- “[the numinous] is a non-rational, non-sensory experience or *feeling* whose primary and immediate object is *outside* the self.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> According to the 2010 PEW Center's *Landmark Study on Religion and Public Life*, **84%** of the world's population (in 230 countries and territories), identify with a religious group. This encompasses 5.8 billion religiously affiliated adults and children out of a world population of 6.9 billion.

<sup>39</sup> See Freud 1927.

<sup>40</sup> Rudolf Otto 1958. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*. (New York: Oxford University Press).

<sup>41</sup> See Ibid.

Otto's research indicates that this transcultural feeling about divine mystery includes elements of creatureliness, fascination, sacredness, and awe whose origin comes from a source outside us. That source is at once beautiful and almost terrifying, close to us and yet completely other, present to us and yet outside our control. This divine other is at once desirable, fascinating, mysterious, immense, within us and outside of us. Some religions refer to it as a personal God, some as a universal creative power, and some as a supreme consciousness which is both beyond and within *our* consciousness, but all of these expressions have a component of a mysterious, awe-inspiring transcendent power which forms the basis of our personal religious experience.

Otto's views here are quite distinct from Freud's. First, Freud does not mention this transcultural fundamental experience of a mysterious divine other, which might be attributable to the fact that he did not study world religions, but rather derived his views of religion from his psychoanalytic paradigm. Secondly, Otto's feeling of the numinous is not derived from either the alleviation of fear or wishful thinking. It is qualitatively different from these emotional dispositions, and exists independently of them. Creatureliness–tremendum–fascination–energy–sacredness is a unique phenomenon which is as likely to *inspire* fear as alleviate it, and as likely to inspire obedience to another's wishes as fulfillment of one's own wishes. Freud's unawareness of this reveals a significant weakness in his theory.

2. Mircea Eliade (d. 1986) is one of the foremost philosophers and historians of religion in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was a professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago and the editor of the *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Religion*.<sup>42</sup> He was influenced by Rudolf Otto, and extended Otto's work into the domain of the social and cultural. Where Otto was concerned mostly with the *interior* experience of *individuals*, Eliade, using Otto's foundation, concerned himself with the *outward* and *collective* expression of these individual experiences.

From his immense study of world religions, he found that there is an irreducible and *transcultural* aspect of religious expression which is derived from interior religious experience. This transcultural collective expression of religious experience gives rise to sacred duties, self-sacrifice for a transcendent good, the desire to order society according to sacred principles, and the urge to develop religious symbols, art, architecture, music, and ritual. These trans-cultural actions seem to come from a *collective* striving to be closer to the domain of the sacred, and to be closer to a higher power who is the highest principle, highest law, highest beauty, highest harmony, and highest unity. The history, proclivity, and preferences of each culture affects its religious symbols, art, liturgy, music, and rituals, but the collective desire to produce these expressions is transcultural, and like the numinous experience, strives to grow closer to the divine mystery.

Freud seems to be unaware of the collective striving to draw close to the Sacred. This is attributable once again to his virtual non-acquaintance with world religions. Eliade's

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<sup>42</sup> Mircea Eliade 1975. *Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries*. (New York: Harper & Row). See also Eliade, ed. 1986 *Encyclopedia of Religion (16 Vols)*. (New York: Macmillan). See also Eliade 1987 *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). See also Eliade 1996. *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press).

transcultural expression of religion is no more derived from alleviation of fear and wish fulfillment than Otto's numinous experience. It stands independently with its own unique origin.

3. Carl Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist who founded the school of analytical psychology. He was a student of Freud's, but broke with him in several important areas, one of which was the psychology of religion. Jung believed that Freud had omitted a dimension of the unconscious which is connected with human religious awareness. He called this dimension collective and archetypal, asserting that there are several archetypal images and symbols present in virtually every human being (across virtually every culture). These archetypal symbols find expression in our dreams, and play very important roles in the meaning of those dreams. They can also make their way to our conscious mind through daydreams or being evoked by religious or mythic art, literature and symbols.

Many of these archetypes concern God, the devil, the hero, and a cosmic struggle between good and evil. This archetypal story calls each of us to be a hero in that cosmic struggle – to take the side of God (who is intrinsically good) against the forces of cosmic evil which are determined to undermine God and goodness. Like the stories of J.R.R. Tolkien (*The Lord of the Rings*) and J.K. Rowling (*Harry Potter*), our interior archetypal story reveals a higher significance and mission in our lives – to resist the forces of evil and to assist the divine mystery in bringing humanity to its proper and full end.

Again, this archetypal story and its attendant symbols are quite independent of the alleviation of fear and wish fulfillment. Indeed, they can incite fear as much as alleviate it and can motivate us to self-sacrifice for the sake of God and goodness instead of seeking the fulfillment *our* wishes.

4. *The Five Transcendental Desires.* The five transcendental desires were first articulated by Plato, but have been affirmed by generations of philosophers since that time.<sup>43</sup> We will begin with the first transcendental—our desire for perfect *truth*. Philosophers, such as Bernard Lonergan, notice that human beings do not simply want *some* truth. We want the complete set of correct answers to the complete set of questions – to know everything about everything. More importantly, we always seem to know when we don't know the complete set of correct answers to the complete set of questions. This is precisely what provokes us to ask questions—any question. How do we know that there is a question to be asked? We must be aware that we *don't know* everything about everything—that we don't know the complete set of answers to all questions. Yet, how can we know that we don't know the complete set of correct answers? Would we not have to have at least a tacit awareness of what the complete set of correct answers would be like? It seems so, for without this tacit awareness of the complete set of correct answers to all questions, we would not be able to detect the *incompleteness* of our current knowledge, and if we could not detect this, we would not ask *any* questions. We would be content to secure practical knowledge about perceptual ideas—such as the correlation between bananas and the satisfaction of our hunger—or lions and the fear of danger, etc.

What could the source of this tacit awareness of the complete set of correct answers to all questions be? Since a source—a cause—must be commensurate with the effect it produces, we

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<sup>43</sup> See Volume II (Chapter 2) of this Trilogy for the historical sources.

conclude that the source of our tacit awareness of the complete set of correct answers is the complete set of correct answers itself.

The complete set of correct answers itself must be an *idea*, because it goes far beyond the world of space, time, physical laws, and individual instances—it includes the whole domain of mathematics, linguistics, metaphysics, and all higher conceptual constructs. Bernard Lonergan and other philosophers prove that it must be an *unrestricted* idea because *restriction* to it would entail *incompleteness*—an unanswered question.<sup>44</sup> This means that the source of our tacit awareness of the complete set of correct answers to all questions—necessary to ask any question—must be an unrestricted idea. Lonergan goes on to show that such an unrestricted idea entails a *unique* unrestricted act of *understanding*—an unrestricted mind—which he calls “God.”<sup>45</sup> If this unique unrestricted act of understanding (God) is the source of our tacit awareness of the complete set of correct answers (necessary to ask any question), then God must be present to our consciousness—elevating our consciousness toward His unrestricted consciousness. In a word, we are *transcendent*.

Transcendental philosophers do not stop at our desire for perfect truth. They also examine our desire for perfect love, perfect goodness, perfect beauty, and perfect home. We can apply the same line of reasoning as the one used above by Lonergan to show the transcendental implications of these desires. From the time of Plato, philosophers believed that we not only desire perfect truth, but also perfect *love*. This is manifest in our discontentment with imperfect love in our family members, friends, and even ourselves. It seems that we have an unlimited capacity to recognize imperfection and love—even the tiniest imperfections amidst truly heroic love. How can we always recognize the imperfections in love if we do not have some kind of awareness of what perfect love would be like? And if we do have a tacit awareness of what perfect love would be like, what would be the source of that awareness? It would seem that the source must be perfect love itself, for the source—the cause—must be commensurate with the effect it produces. Assuming that perfect love is not to be found in anyone or anything in this finite world, then God (perfect love itself) must be present to us elevating us toward its perfectly loving state. If this is the case, then our nature is transcendent and our destiny beyond this world.

The same line of reasoning can be applied to our desire for perfect justice or goodness. Most people will admit that they are not content with imperfect fairness or justice—from family members, friends, the courts, the workplace, schools, or perfect strangers. Once again, it seems that we have an unlimited capacity to recognize imperfection in the fairness, justice, or goodness of others—and even ourselves. Even children without any training are capable of recognizing the slightest failing in fairness on the part of parents and teachers. How can we always recognize imperfections in fairness, justice and goodness unless we have some awareness of what perfect fairness, justice and goodness would be like? And if we do have a tacit awareness of what perfect fairness, justice, and goodness would be like, what would be the source of that awareness? It would seem that the source must be perfect fairness, justice, and goodness itself, because the source—the cause—must be commensurate with the effect it produces. Assuming

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<sup>44</sup> See Bernard Lonergan 1992. *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding in Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Vol.3) ed. by Frederick Crowe and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), pp 657-708.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

that perfect fairness, justice and goodness itself is not to be found in anyone or anything in this finite world, then perfect fairness, justice, and goodness itself (God) would have to be present to us elevating us toward his perfectly just and good state. If this is the case, then our nature is transcendent and our destiny beyond this world.

Transcendental philosophers apply the same reasoning to beauty, because we have the capacity to recognize every imaginable imperfection in nature, art, music, architecture, poetry, mathematics, literary expression, moral beauty, and even spiritual beauty. This again provokes the question of how we can always recognize imperfection in beauty if we do not have some kind of awareness of what perfect beauty would be like. Once again, the source – cause – must be commensurate with its effect – and so we conclude that the source of our awareness of perfect beauty must be perfect beauty itself. Assuming that perfect beauty is nowhere to be found in a finite and imperfect world, then would it not imply that we are in contact with this transmaterial reality? If so, then God must be present to us, elevating our consciousness toward His transcendently perfect state. This implies once again that we are destined for something more than this world.

Plato believed it was possible to approach perfect beauty itself through an intellectual form of contemplation, and so he proposed to his students the following meditation at the end of his dialogue the *Symposium*:

He who would proceed aright in this matter should begin in youth to visit beautiful forms; and first...to love one such form only.... [S]oon he will of himself perceive...that the beauty in every form is one and the same...and will become a lover of all beautiful forms; in the next stage he will consider that the beauty of the mind is more honorable than the beauty of the outward form. ...until he is compelled to contemplate and see the beauty of institutions and laws, and to understand that the beauty of them is all of one family, and that personal beauty is a trifle; and after laws and institutions he will go on to the sciences, that he may see their beauty, ...and at last the vision is revealed to him of a single science, which is the science of beauty everywhere. ... He who has been instructed thus far in the things of love, and who has learned to see the beautiful in due order and succession, when he comes towards the end will suddenly perceive a nature of wondrous beauty...a nature which in the first place is everlasting, not growing and decaying... but beauty absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting, which without diminution and without increase, or any change, is imparted to the ever-growing and perishing beauties of all other things.<sup>46</sup>

I have written extensively about the desire for perfect home in Spitzer 2010 *New Proofs for the Existence of God* (pp. 281-284). For the moment we may conclude with a quotation from the great physicist and astronomer, Sir Arthur Eddington, who intuited the presence of a

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<sup>46</sup>Plato, *Symposium*, in *Symposium and Phaedrus*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Classic Books America, 1993), 210a–211b, p. 43.



transcendent – spiritual reality to his consciousness, not only during the pursuit of art and prayer, but also in the pursuit of science:

We all know that there are regions of the human spirit untrammelled by the world of physics. In the mystic sense of the creation around us, in the expression of art, in a yearning towards God, the soul grows upward and finds the fulfillment of something implanted in its nature. The sanction for this development is within us, a striving born with our consciousness or an Inner Light proceeding from a greater power than ours. Science can scarcely question this sanction, for the pursuit of science springs from a striving which the mind is impelled to follow, a questioning that will not be suppressed. Whether in the intellectual pursuits of science or in the mystical pursuits of the spirit, the light beckons ahead and the purpose surging in our nature responds.<sup>47</sup>

We may now conclude that there is considerable evidence for our transcendental nature – from our five transcendental desires for perfect truth, love, justice (goodness), beauty, and home, as well as our natural religious inclination – including our experience of a mysterious, wholly Other, fascinating, sublime reality (called “the numen” by Rudolf Otto), our awareness of the sacred manifesting itself in the profane world (Eliade), and the presence of Jung’s archetypal myth and symbols in our unconscious mind.

There is far more evidence for our transcendental nature not discussed here – for example, near death experiences (go to “[Science, Medicine, and Near Death Experiences](#)”), Gödel’s Proof (Spitzer 2015 *Soul’s Upward Yearning* pp. 129-132), heuristic notions (Spitzer 2015 *Soul’s Upward Yearning* pp. 122-128 and 133-138), and Chalmers’ “hard problem of consciousness” (Spitzer 2015 *Soul’s Upward Yearning* pp. 216-228).

The reason we focused on transcendental desires was twofold. First since they are *desires*, then their fulfillment will lead to *happiness* – and their non-fulfillment will lead to *unhappiness*. This is explained in another free article, “[Escaping Your Personal Hell](#)” (Section II). Secondly, we would not be able to have these transcendental desires if their source – perfect truth itself, perfect love itself, perfect justice (goodness) itself, and perfect beauty itself were not present to us. In Spitzer 2015 *The Soul’s Upward Yearning* (Chapter Four), we show that perfect love itself, perfect justice (goodness) itself, and perfect beauty itself are perfect unities, and as such, must be attributes of the “unique, unrestricted act of thinking which is the Creator of everything else” – God. This should give us a clue to the fact that our happiness does not lie in this world alone – but very probably in an absolute transcendent reality – Who alone can satisfy our desires for perfect truth, love, justice (goodness), beauty, and home.

### III.

#### The Four Levels of Happiness

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<sup>47</sup> Sir Arthur Eddington, 1928. *The Nature of the Physical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). pp 327-328.

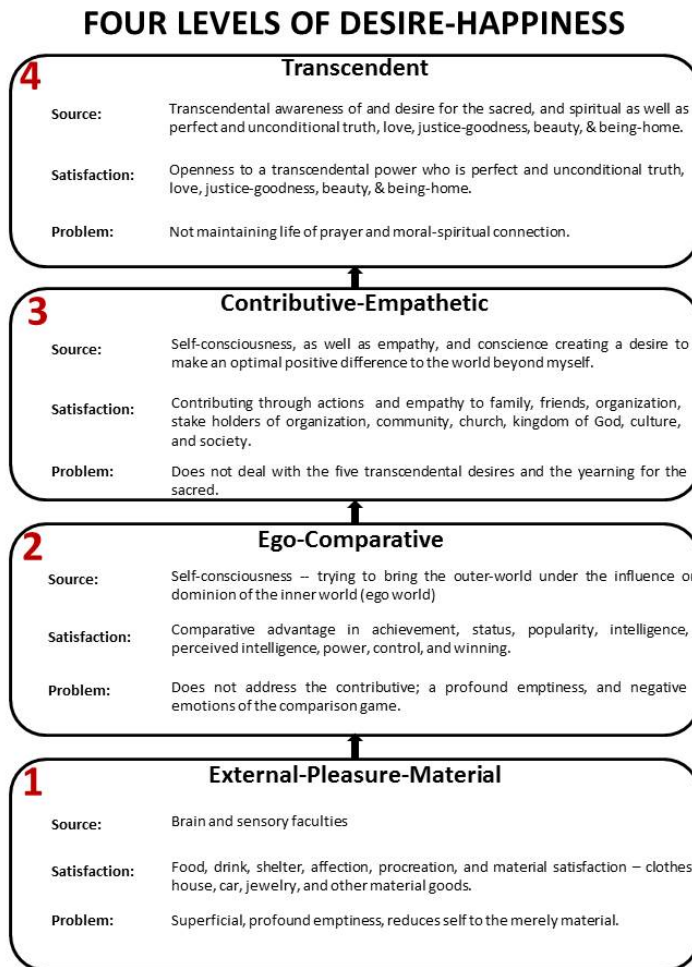
Up to this point, we have talked about four *kinds* of desire-happiness, but as Plato, Aristotle, and other philosophers noticed they may be organized into four *levels* on the basis of their pervasiveness, endurance, and depth. A brief explanation of these criteria is in order. *Pervasiveness* refers to “the degree to which the effects of activities associated with each kind of desire-happiness extend beyond the self.” So, for example, the effects of activities associated with the first kind of desire-happiness (say eating a good steak or buying some nice clothes) do not extend very far beyond the self. Similarly, the effects of the second kind of desire-happiness (winning a chess game, receiving an award, being acknowledged as intelligent) are also mostly confined to the self. Activities associated with the third kind of happiness (making a difference to someone or something *beyond* the self) are decidedly different. Instead of bringing the locus of control and the focus of attention to ourselves, we invest ourselves in the people and community *beyond* us. Thus by definition, the third kind of happiness must be more pervasive than the first two. Finally, the fourth kind of happiness (concerned with transcendence) is not only concerned with the people and community around us, but with the whole transcendent domain – that is God and the totality of all that is. When we invest ourselves in this transcendent domain (and or the totality of all that is) we have an even more pervasive effect than with the third kind of happiness.

The second criterion, *endurance*, refers to how long the effects of activities associated with a particular kind of happiness will last. So, for example, the effects of the activities associated with the first kind of happiness do not last very long, i.e., a fine steak, and within an hour I might be looking around for something else to eat. The effects of activities associated with the second kind of happiness can last longer than those of the first – the afterglow of receiving an award or winning a sports game or achieving a milestone. The effects of activities associated with the third kind of happiness can last longer than the second – when we do something to improve the lives of others, these improvements can build relationships, networks, and social bonds which can last much longer than the afterglow of accolades. Finally, the effects of activities associated with the fourth kind of happiness can last forever. So, for example, if we help someone to see their transcendental and eternal dignity (and help them to orient their lives toward this more pervasive and enduring end), it could have an *eternal* effect.

The third criterion, *depth*, refers to the degree to which we use our intellectual, creative, and psychological powers. The first kind of happiness does not engage my higher creative intellectual and psychological powers to any meaningful degree. It is basically restricted to biological stimuli, kinesthetic stimuli, and material security and comfort. Activities associated with the second kind of happiness frequently engage both creative and intellectual powers in order to get ahead in the world, to receive a promotion, and to be admired. It generally requires an education. Activities associated with the third kind of happiness not only require the engagement of our creative and intellectual powers, but also entail the use of empathy and conscience, as well as our ability to form and carry out ideals. Finally, activities associated with the fourth kind of happiness engage all of our previous internal powers as well as the five transcendental desires, and our sense of the spiritual-sacred.

From this we can conclude, that in general, Level Two is more pervasive, enduring, and deep than Level One, and Level Three more than Level Two, and Level Four even more than Level Three. For this reason, many of the thinkers cited above, implicitly or explicitly, rank the

levels of desire-happiness according to these criteria.<sup>48</sup> The following table summarizes what we will now term the four *levels* of desire-happiness.



All the above mentioned philosophers agree on two points – if we want to make the most of our lives (to live the fullest life possible), we will want to live for the most pervasive, enduring, and deep effects of our internal powers. This would certainly mean living for Levels Three and Four. Yet all of these philosophers would hasten to add that none of the levels should be neglected, and that to a certain extent, Maslow’s need hierarchy applies. So, if we do not have some material security and comfort, we will not be able to pursue ego-comparative advantage, contributive-empathetic activities, and transcendent activities. Similarly, if we do not have some sense of our value in society (from acknowledgement, status, achievement, education, and even winning – the fruits of Level Two), then we may not have the confidence and credibility to pursue a contributive, empathetic, and transcendent end. Levels Three and Four complement

<sup>48</sup> Especially Plato in his tri-partite soul (in *The Republic*), Aristotle in his ranking of the goods in the *Nicomachean Ethics* book one, St. Augustine in his *Confessions*, St. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica* (first part of the second part, questions one through five), Soren Kierkegaard in his ranking of the aesthetic, ethical, and transcendent levels (in *Either Or*), Martin Buber in his ranking of the I-it, I-thou, I-Thou relationships (in *I and Thou*), as well as most other religious existentialists (such as Gabriel Marcel, Karl Jaspers, and Max Scheler).

each other, enabling love to give an authentic ground to faith, and faith to bring love to its perfect transcendent end.