

## **The qualities of our defects** (the virtues of our faults)

Each of us has his qualities and lesser bright sides. The latter, when we do not ignore them, embarrass us most often. And those we perceive in others rarely leave us cold, sometimes to the point of considering them unbearable.

At first sight, we tend not to notice our own flaws, except when they handicap us. And, over time, if we are criticized for one or the other, we generally prefer stay deaf, denying them or hiding them. It is not so simple to publicly acknowledge our faults, and even less to accept them serenely. And with regard to those of our loved ones, we are rather inclined to consider that if we love them, it is in spite of their faults.

And so the defects of each other are sometimes able to mess up our life.

### **And yet**

Yet, it is at the heart of our defects that sits the most beautiful part of our humanity. Because despite being the least beautiful part of our personality, they can be at the source of our finest qualities.

It is therefore worthwhile to look at our own imperfections, to acknowledge them, to know them and to live better with them.

Indeed, pulling the right thread of a defect, allows to let blossom the quality that corresponds to it. So knowing and acknowledging our own defects helps us to blossom better.

Contrary to widely held beliefs, it is not necessarily constructive to fight the darkest part of our personality, and even worse, to try to hide it, in order to submit to the request of our entourage or any social diktat, and to comply with what is expected from us. It may harm us much more than the apparent benefits we could get from it. For, it consists somehow in denying oneself. And the consequences can be more negative than the illusion of the disappearance of one of our shortcomings.

It may, however, be useful sometimes on the short term, in the case in which a part of our personality almost systematically leads to ruin all our emotional and social relations.

For example, for persons who are impulsive and violent, it's in their best interest to learn to control their impulses so as not to harm others.

But in the longer term, it is much more interesting to know the needs hiding behind their impulsive and violent behaviors, in order to discover how to respond to these needs in a softer way. And this could, for example, lead them to discover an unfulfilled need for justice, and further, lead them to develop or reinforce qualities such as honesty, integrity and consistency, for example.

It would then be useless to seek a way to fight our defect in order to overcome it and mask it with a quality. It's more about acknowledging what is and accepting it; which intrinsically leads to a decrease in its intensity and can generate a transformation.

When we learn to know and to accept our dark side, it doesn't mean that it will take up the whole space. For, when we stop fighting against our defects and masking them, and when we begin to accept ourselves as we are, with these defects; then they allow to discover the qualities that are hidden just behind.

So, for example, someone shy could develop a lot of self-confidence.

Someone impulsive could become patient.

Someone who is stubborn could become persistent and determined.

Someone who is fearful can become serene and confident.

This doesn't happen in the blink of an eye, but it is possible to notice that in some areas of life, the quality develops, although in others, it is still the default that prevails.

## **Originally**

In reality, most of our faults are related to, either habits taken early in life, or defense mechanisms in front of fears often related to unhealed old emotional wounds.

During our childhood, or adolescence, we have learned in some situations to react in a certain way that was, or seemed to us, appropriate at the time. For example, in front of people on whom we were depending, or because we were not in full control of our faculties or because of a lack of maturity, we couldn't react otherwise. We used means at disposal at that time in order to meet our needs despite the educational obligations that were hanging over us. And we just kept the same attitude in similar situations when we reached adulthood, without thinking of questioning what, for us, has almost always been obvious.

It can also be the result of habits taken by submission, by obedience in education. The conditioning established in such way, does not disappear if one does not become aware of its existence. Yet, education often leads us to live in a very conditioned way, and it is only once autonomous that it is possible to question these conditioning and this doesn't happen automatically, for, the most part remain unconscious.

However, with the maturity and autonomy reached in adulthood, these reactions may have become inappropriate, and if we have not paid attention to them, we will have maintained them.

Consider the lie, for example. In front of an authoritarian and sometimes unfair parent or teacher, lying may have seemed to us the best solution in order to avoid excessive or unjust punishments, or to make us being appreciated, or simply to make fun or escape unpleasant obligations. In adulthood, whereas we are no longer subject to the same type of authority, and become autonomous for most of our actions, we may have kept the same behavior. We have not realized that we can make demands, negotiate, take our place, give our limits, while keeping a form of honesty and frankness, without it being necessary to lie, to dodge, to manipulate. It is possible that the lie can continue to save us some inconvenience, ... superficially. But it is more likely that it would lock us in a world difficult to access by people around us. A world where the truth has little place and where we always have to lie more to hide the lies that preceded. And where it becomes difficult to match the lies between them or when they were different according to the person to whom they were addressed. It can even become pathological if we start believing in our own lies.

Behavioral habits previously contracted in a conditioned or defensive way can thus remain during adulthood. We adopted them and maintained them because they allowed us to solve problematic situations. And often we have extended these modes of operation to other situations where it was less appropriate.

And, over time, we have not changed or made evolve them, even when we found that they were not really adapted, or brought us a lot of inconveniences.

We end up being trapped by our own defects, because we are blamed for them, because people are moving away from us because they are messing up our lives and are the source of our worst problems.

## **Focusing on the obstacle consists in rushing on it**

However, it is possible to avoid the traps that we set for ourselves.

Our defects, our faults, our manias, our dark sides, our weaknesses, are a little like the holes described in the story of Portia Nelson: "Autobiography in five short chapters". They make our life much more difficult, but there is no need to fall in them, there are other ways.

Here it is :

### ***Autobiography in Five Short Chapters***

#### *Chapter 1*

*I walk down the street.*

*There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.*

*I fall in.*

*I am lost ... I am helpless.*

*It isn't my fault.*

*It takes forever to find a way out.*

#### *Chapter 2*

*I walk down the same street.*

*There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.*

*I pretend I don't see it.*

*I fall in again.*

*I can't believe I am in the same place.*

*But it isn't my fault.*

*It still takes a long time to get out.*

#### *Chapter 3*

*I walk down the same street.*

*There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.*

*I see it is there.*

*I still fall in ... it's a habit.*

*My eyes are open.*

*I know where I am.*

*It is my fault.*

*I get out immediately.*

#### *Chapter 4*

*I walk down the same street.*

*There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.*

*I walk around it.*

#### *Chapter 5*

*I walk down another street.*

When we stumble over a problem in life, when a defect that we know well show up once again, the natural tendency is, if we want to get ourselves out of the hole, to become obsessed with the problem, with the hole. And the more we focus on our defects, on our problems, on these holes; the more holes we encounter, the more they will grow, the deeper they will become and the more difficult it will be to avoid them and get out of them.

Denying them is not the solution. But looking elsewhere makes it possible to discover other horizons, firm stable grounds, a safer path. Knowing, acknowledging and accepting aspects of our personality that bother us, consists precisely of no longer considering them as obstacles and makes it possible to no longer seek at all costs to defend oneself from them.

And once we understand that it is no longer necessary to fall into the hole, and we begin to choose streets in perfect condition, then it becomes possible to notice that taking advantage of our old bad habit is within our reach. It taught us, for example, patience, the patience of waiting for help; or it taught us to tame our fears and our loneliness at the bottom of the hole; or it made us very resourceful and imaginative when we managed to find the way out of the hole. And these learnings can prove to be real treasures when we walk new paths.

The day we are able to choose to walk in another street, where we make life choices that lead to success rather than always falling back into the same problems; that day, we have, for our new projects, the qualities that were forged when we were at the bottom of the hole: resourcefulness, creativity, patience, serenity, psychological strength in front of adversity, by examples, and we can imagine many more, each one traveling a different path.

It is also possible that the default is simply the quality, with a few nuances. For example, the tendency to stubbornness could be an aptitude for perseverance and determination to carry out our projects. The defect, in this case, inherently contained the quality but was inappropriately used.

Looking deep within oneself, accepting to see the aspects that repel us the most in us, is a royal way to transform them and to widen, deepen, enlarge our part of happiness, and that of our entourage.

Some character traits may, however, come from another source. Knowing them, acknowledging them, accepting them, will then not change anything. These are usually inappropriate or problematic reactions and behaviors related to fears, themselves linked to traumatic wounds that we never could heal, and of which we often ignore the existence. It is not necessary to imagine big traumatic shocks. These may be small wounds that have created an appropriate reaction during the triggering event. But the freezing produced by the fear experienced the first time will make that we are no longer able to produce other more appropriate behaviors in close but different circumstances, and that we will constantly reproduce the same behavior without even having the choice to choose others.

In this case, combating the inappropriate behavior is also the best way to strengthen it. Just like seeking at any price to get out of a rut when one is well mired. We only dig deeper the troublesome character trait.

It is just as vain in this case to try to hide it or to make it disappear.

On the other hand, it is preferable to become conscious of its origin and to try to heal it, in order to become able to respond more adequately to the need at the source of it. The healing of a traumatic wound automatically generate the backfill of the rut dug over time, and the immediate change in behavior, that is to say, the disappearance of the defect.

The automatic repetition then no longer has any reason to exist and we rediscover the choice to act as we wish and in a more adapted and satisfactory way.

### **The benefit lies not so much in the discovery of the quality as in the look at reality that changes**

Whatever the origin of our defects, the benefit of learning to live with them by accepting them is not so much to mitigate them by discovering qualities; it is mainly elsewhere.

For, changing the way we look at reality by accepting it rather than condemning it, leads to give ourselves the permission to be ourselves, to open ourselves to the knowledge of ourselves, to become still more ourselves, dropping the masks, becoming more conscious. And this authenticity is not only liberating and less demanding, but it will also allow to be better approached and better appreciated by others.

Better still, by giving back to ourselves the permission to be ourselves, we inherently nourish our self confidence, and indirectly we learn to discover other resources and inner riches. Because the day we open the inner door, without further taboo to hide the unacceptable, we discover a reality very different and more comfortable than we had imagined, and much less dark than the surface let it appear.

And that's not all. Because it does not only work in a reflexive way.

When we are able to change the look at ourselves, with the indulgence, and even the absence of judgment, and the benevolence necessary to get there; we become capable of changing our our look at others.

Knowing better the mechanisms underlying the presence of certain negative character traits; we become capable of perceiving the humanity of each of the persons we meet, and can therefore replace the hardness of our judgments with empathy.

For, what bothers us in others is always something that we carry in ourselves and that we do not like, and that echoes, unconsciously, precisely because we do not want to see it.

By transforming ourselves, it becomes possible to transform our judgments about the people around us, by practicing the same indulgence and benevolence that we have become able to give to ourselves. Simply because we now know that their defects, like ours, are nothing more than defenses, habits, conditioning, inadequate and obsolete reactions that have no other goal than to meet their own needs. just as legitimate as ours. Understanding this changes our perception of the other, allows us to see beyond the facade, and to love him/her for who he/she really is.

Entering in this approach should make obsolete all our judgments of the other, all our criticisms. Activating this process does not necessarily clear our intolerances, but drives away the limits of our indulgence and facilitates access to forgiveness, to openness to difference, to understanding of human and social mechanisms.

It makes us gradually strive towards learning to let go of struggles and rebellions in front of all that does not suit us, in order to choose more and more often in our social and emotional relations, the alternatives of consensus and cooperation, respecting our limits - sometimes allowing us to leave groups or systems that do not respect these limits - and respecting the limits of those who are facing us.

This will not necessarily make us lose, in a snap, some of our inclinations for criticism, slander, denunciation, self-sufficiency, contempt; this sometimes implacable side that defines the other without knowing him/her really, and especially without having removed our glasses which prevent to really look at him/her.

But we can learn to use two different ways of thinking in parallel, and choose increasingly often to believe in our indulgent thoughts and to base our acts relating to this. It is even possible at the beginning, to still believe in our old ways of thinking, but intending to put into action what is suggested by our new ways of thinking. This allow to move more easily from one to the other, for, in the end, we necessarily harvest the fruits of it. It can be judged as a hypocritical way of behaving. It all depends on the real intention that motivates our actions. If it is really positive and indulgent, despite a form of incredulity that continues to characterize it; it will not be hypocrisy.

It is in this context that unconditional love can flourish. It is likely that one can truly love someone unconditionally only when one knows and loves his/her weaknesses, and it is to the point that one would probably not be able to love him/her without these weaknesses. Because our weaknesses are our humanity.

And we can then observe that, the more we adopt such a look around us, the more people around us will improve.

And it works in two ways. Not only, by evacuating the negative beliefs regarding them, we put ourselves in such a disposition with regard to them when we are dealing with them, that we then don't stir up the manifestation of their defects. But, by not feeding thoughts like judgments, criticisms, reproaches, regarding them, even without any explicit manifestation on our part, we will be able to discover that their defects (the ones we reproached them before) will diminish. It has to be experimented in order to conceiving it believable, but it really works that way.

This can be explained by the morphic fields (see article : <http://sechangersoi.be/EN/4EN-Articles/Sheldrake%20EN.htm>  
by the law of attraction (see article - in French) : <http://sechangersoi.be/4Articles/boomerang01.htm>  
by the power of intention - through the rice experiment for example, see article : <http://sechangersoi.be/EN/4EN-Articles/The%20rice%20experiment.htm>

Whatever the concrete reasons, the result is there, and can improve with practice.

This dark side that is so scary is probably a kind of mirage that does not really correspond to reality. We have every interest in learning to look at this dark side, not as a problematic part of ourselves, but as a potential treasure. Because it is there that one finds all the passion, all the rage to live.

Discovering our dark side can bring us to enlighten our lives. To discover it in others can lead us to understand them and to learn to love them more and truly.

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