

Interpersonal Communication in the Process of Value Formation

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Abstract: Issues of communication, isolation, and education are part of our everyday lives, whether private or professional. The behaviour of the young generation at school and at home has different forms. It demonstrates their actions, way of thinking and feeling. Furthermore, their behaviour expresses their future tendencies. These forms of behaviour are strongly influenced by a lack of communication. As a result, the educational process is made harder, sometimes even impossible. Many experts in ethics, pedagogy and psychology have been paying attention to this issue and have started to evaluate its impact on the young.

Key words: change of values, authority, personality, self-actualisation, friendship.

1 Introduction

The human nature plays a crucial role in the process of self-actualisation in the society. Interpersonal relations form the basic component of this process, in other words, it is the direction of person to person. In social behaviour, there are typical forms of attitudes that are connected with particular social activities. These are isolation, egocentrism, egoism, animosity and sadism (Leszczuk, 1982, cited in Adamski, 1982, p. 305). On the other hand, the altruistic attitude inclines to voluntary care for the others and their welfare, as well as expressions of benignancy. A subjective attitude that prefers only individual knowledge and subjective feelings lead a young person to isolation. However, as a result, these aspects might be helpful in the process of personality growth and for the common good.

2 Discussion

What are the basic pillars of human nature in the society? How is it manifested and what is typical for it? These are the questions we deal with in this paper. There are three attributes characterizing the naturalness of humans in the society, highlighting their societal character. First of all, humans are open to other people. Then, humans need other people and their company. They would not be

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able to live alone and only in society they are able to grow. Lastly, humans unify with other people, creating various forms of society (Dogiel, 1992, p. 66).

Everyone is born into a society. At home, where we are brought after birth, parents and probably also siblings are awaiting us. Some experts of development psychology claim that a child perceives other persons who are in its close proximity, before it is able to perceive its own personality. Moreover, they believe that these people provide both physical and spiritual support for the realisation of the child's needs. A young person grows mainly in a family environment and only later he/she integrates into societal institutions such as kindergartens, schools, sport clubs, etc. which participate in forming his/her personality. They become a part of the child's world in which he/she lives. Later on, in puberty, children tend to flee from often forced societal groups (Zwolinski, 1994, pp. 16-17). A typical feature of the youth stage is a change of personality, a young person transforms into a grown-up. This period is accompanied by many difficulties and behaviour crisis. Some young people go through this period easily, but some of them might be quite aggressive, irascible, differing from other young people in the way they dress and behave. They tend to do exactly such things that are rejected by the society they live in and they behave in an "anti-social way". In contrast, there are such young people who prefer being alone and out of contact. They are constantly lost in thoughts and are absent-minded. This period might last only for a short time, however, it might last for a few years, too. Some of the young might behave less irascibly. Instead, they study philosophy, religion, hoping they could change the world as they usually dislike everything they were taught and told. Another typical feature of this period is the rejection of authority as they adopt a critical stance on everything that has been discovered, invented or written so far (Plužek, 1994, p. 118). For example, the refusal of any authority might start with the rejection of their teachers or finding the negatives of their parents. As a result, society as such sinks into oblivion. The young does not wish to be labelled and placed into any social groups. They grow out of them. Of course, it does not mean that they do not need other people. They usually seek and long for the "authentic meeting". As in their childhood mostly parents chose their friends, in this period of life they wish to choose a particular group of people to spend their time with. Young people in puberty make a review of their environment and choose what is natural for them. And this time, they choose based on their criteria. They express a great desire for fellowship with other people. As evidence of this fact, they create groups with their own and typical ideology, symbolism and actions (Zwolinski, 1994, pp. 16-17).

A typical attribute of human nature in the society is *openness to other people*. It is natural that people look for contact with other people. Humans are open to each other and want to give away themselves and share with other people. In this process, they transcend themselves and realize their own being. As a result, an interpersonal relationship arises: me – you, and later me – us, and we – you. The

relationship me – you creates a basis and leads to the relationship me – absolutely, me – God as an absolute realization of interpersonal relationships (Dogiel, 1992, p. 66). Probably, one of the most popular figures of existential philosophy, Martin Buber, said that “by means of you, the person becomes I” (Zwolinski, 1994, p. 18). Interpersonal relationships are created through love and knowledge, facilitated by speech as a means of communication. The deepest meaning of interpersonal relationships is the gift of love. Interpersonal communication, also understood as the process of mutual exchange of personal values, enriches people and it enables them to realize their personalities. Of course, this communication is possible only thanks to the fact that humans are free and wise. This freedom and wisdom enable them to offer something to other people and also to accept gifts from the others. Therefore, it can be stated that a kind of value exchange is always a basis of interpersonal communication (Dogiel, 1992, p. 66).

A human being is not able to live alone, he/she needs other people, company. Only in society is a personality able to grow fully. Thomas Aquinas, the representative of scholasticism, claimed: “homo est naturaliter animal sociale, eo quod sibi non sufficit ad vitam”, in English “it is natural for a man to be social as he is not sufficient to live alone”. This applies to many areas of life, such as physical, psychological, intellectual, moral, economic, and political ones. In contrast to animals, humans are not born with ready nimbleness, reactions and behaviour. They have to learn everything step by step, with the help of others. Humans make use of knowledge and wisdom of antecedents, therefore, they do not have to start from the very beginning (Dogiel, 1992, p. 67).

As people are not self-sufficient neither for life nor for development, they unify with other people, they create various societies in order to gain good that they are not able to achieve on their own. The common good – *bonum commune* – is the goal of every society. These three features characterise and highlight the natural sociability of the human pointing out the need for a social life. The third points out the ability to carry out things, i.e. the ability to live with others and achieve social goals (Dogiel, 1992, p. 67).

Friendship plays a crucial role in the process of kindness formation. A friendly relationship between parents and growing children is very important as it helps and teaches young people how to establish it. Moreover, it teaches them how to accept certain commitments and prepares the young to act with love, of course, with prior knowledge of the person, his/her motives, readiness to talk as well as willingness to share his problems and happiness. Moreover, comradeship teaches them to be patient, sympathetic. It also teaches an active help, pleasure, resignation and also criticism. All these attributes are effective provided that the person is convicted that he/she acts for the good of the other people. It has been proven by many researchers that a good comradeship between a father and his daughter resulted in a good choice of the daughter’s life partner. The point was that the knowledge of comradeship created by the father served as a model when

choosing a husband (Malcher, 1982, cited in Adamski, 1982, p. 228). If the young experience a friendly relationship at home, within their family, they show a greater ability to make friends out of the house, in a group of friends and in homogenous comradeships, i.e. girls with girls and boys with boys. Friendship in which the young can get to know each other, might later result in a comradeship between boys and girls, which mostly grows into love. Love in the engaged and married couples that is based on comradeship helps in the process of marriage formation and their mutual support on their life path. If the relationships between parents and children are not based on comradeship, parents should at least show interest in their children's comradeship out of the house, and allow them to bring their friends home. Parents can see and discuss particular friendships. It is wrong if parents prevent their children from making friends or they forbid particular comradeship without any explanation. The forbidden comradeship will develop anyway. Moreover, it would create a suspicion that it is bad and focus on irrelevant things. Another fault of parents might be if they try to substitute a friend or try to choose friends for their children. A friend is someone chosen, someone who helps us to get closer to other people (Malcher, 1982, cited in Adamski, 1982, p. 229).

Mass communication, especially television, has become a kind of educational institution. Teaching basic skills such as reading and writing are not sufficient. It is important to learn how to listen and watch. We ought to keep in mind that we all live in the developing audio-visual civilisation in which there exist three symbols of communication – words, pictures and sounds. Illiteracy is not characterized by not knowing the letters of the alphabet. The issue of interpersonal communication, receiving and sending information and thoughts cannot be ignored in the education of the present youth. The functions of mass communication modify the existing role of parents who have to be engaged in the process preparation of the young for their future lives. Creation of appropriate conditions for building up immunity to external impacts and self-control of the young in every area has become extremely important. A strong emphasis should be placed on the so-called method of dialogue which might reduce destructive influence, develops the ability to accept others, and to criticize carefully and sensitively. All this ought to happen in an open climate, without any prejudice or suspicion. It is not advisable to criticise the young who adore their idols and heroes on TVs. Neither should we impose them our role models nor idols. The interpersonal dialogue does not work that way. On the other hand, it is not appropriate to just stand aside and wait till the young person realizes what is good and valuable and what is wrong. By means of constant and gradual development and focusing their attention on higher values in the content of recent programmes, we might be able to raise the overall culture of the young generation who very often feel lonely and under constant supervision. The mentioned motives of dialogue ought to help in the process of analysis and critical reflection. Moreover, they should lead to an active use of the observed

and experienced events (Grzegorski, 1982, cited in Adamski, 1982, p. 332). There is something in every human that does not change. The youth of today is the same as it has always been. However, at the same time we can claim that they are different from the youth before. In the past, the young generation was formed by painful war experiences, concentration camps, and imminent danger. As a result, such experiences brought about feelings and features of heroes. If in every period of life people long for love, in one's youth they long for it even more intensively. Nevertheless, the desire for self-actualisation should not be understood as a stance that allows us to do anything. The young do not want to be said yes or no as they are ready to be reprimanded. They need somebody who would lead them and who would support them. If they look for reliable people, it is because they feel they are full of kindness and are able to walk paths with them (Ján Pavol II, 1995, p.117).

The notion of education means the overall interaction and communication between adults (father, mother, teacher, family members, etc.) and children. The choice of educational methods and procedures influences a child's behaviour and experiences which, finally, also influence the behaviour of adults. The most important attribute in education is the emotional relationship with a child as well as the way of educational control. Furthermore, motivation of children and creation of a personal relationship that is based on unconditional acceptance and sympathy, put internal processes of self-development in motion. A human personality becomes more mature and grown-up. However, it is also crucial that the person is aware of these features (Čáp, 1996, pp. 131-135).

Behaviour disorders are defined as deviations in socialisation. The basic features of behaviour disorders can be defined as follows: unwillingness to respect common rules of behaviour for the particular age or level of intellectual powers. Even though that some children are able to understand these rules, they do not behave in accordance with them. The reason for such behaviour might be a different value system, which they bring from their families, other personal motives or the fact that they are not able to control their behaviour. As an example, we would like to mention the behaviour of Romany children, which corresponds with the principles of their ethnic group (e.g. their attitude to truancy). The relationship between majority and minority groups may be the source of various problems. Inappropriate behaviour can disturb social relationships. Probably, the most common barrier in establishing and maintaining a friendly relationship is the lack of empathy, heartlessness, egoism or inability to control one's behaviour. Children and young people who suffer from behavioural disorders are usually extremely focused on themselves and on satisfying their own needs. They do not accept the necessity to adapt to social expectations, i.e. to certain principles. Many times the reason is that they did not experience such a behaviour in their family. Their parents probably did not have an emotional relationship which would provide their children with positive experience and empathy. They are not considerate of others and the rights of

others they find to be pointless. People are not important for them and they are interested only in things they might gain from others. Their relationships are usually shallow as children are not able to act unselfishly, they engage themselves only if they can earn profit. As a result, they are often rejected and have a lot of conflicts. Moreover, they are not able to self-evaluate. Children are usually not critical enough. They do not consider their behaviour to be bad and do not feel guilty of their misdemeanour. A disproportionate social understanding leads to recurring aggressive reactions of some individuals. The reason for this is the fact that they are probably not able to decode the behaviour of their classmates in various social situations (Vágnerová, 2001, p. 285).

The most important goal of education is to gain humanity in behaviour of children. Its core creates education of individuals by means of positive influence. To be a human being means to be a morally developed individual. Moral ideals and moral values are understood as real phenomena *sui generis* of the mankind's social and historical evolution. They are connected with the past, present as well as the future of humans, as well as with the socio-spiritual development in spheres of natural, historical, material and cultural development. The moral progress of mankind is possible only if each and every human personality is developed and if the goal and meaning of life is the development of human spiritual and creative powers. Moral ideals which integrate permanent as well as changeable moral values serve as a stimulating power which prevents people from staying in position „*status quo moralis*“. They give an impression of dissatisfaction, quest and further effort to become perfect. One's personality is formed in the complex structure of the educational process. The process of moral education has a universal position in this structure. Further, it has an impact on the whole personality and leads it towards moral maturity. It creates the essential humanistic and cultural value of human's education.

The process of value formation is characterized by active search, discovering, acceptance and identification (Žilínek, 1997, pp. 61-68). By acceptance of these attributes, process of interpersonal communication and education of the youth of today becomes more real. This fact is proved by the practice of those who experience it in everyday self-actualisation.

3 Conclusions

Isolation, egocentrism, egoism, degradation or hostility are a part of today's society. On the other hand, there are altruistic attitudes, in other words inclination to voluntary care for the others and their welfare, as well as expressions of benignancy. Man, by means of subjective feelings, is directed to isolation, which finally helps in the process of individuality formation and the common good. Many times modern development psychology points out that a child perceives other persons who are in its nearness before it is able to perceive its own personality. Therefore, it is important that the openness to other people

should be a part of human nature. Interpersonal communication enriches people and allows them to become fully-fledged human beings. Moreover, interpersonal communication is also understood as an exchange of moral and personal values. Every single human needs somebody to interact with, i.e. he/she needs other people. Therefore, problems of interpersonal communication should not be overlooked in the process of youth education.

Moral ideals and moral values are understood as real phenomena *sui generis* of the mankind's social and historical evolution. What is more, they are connected with the past, present and future of humans. Searching these values and ideals is typical for discovering, acceptance and identification. In conclusion, we can claim that by acceptance of these attributes, the process of interpersonal communication and education of the youth of today become more real.

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