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FROM INDIVIDUAL WELLBEING TO COLLECTIVE WELFARE: A NEW PERSPECTIVE OF BEING AND BECOMING IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

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Cover image: Woman in face mask during COVID-19 pandemic, 17 March 2020. Maridav / Alamy Stock Photo.

ABSTRACT

This article gives an overview of the twice four-dimensional logic that underpins the POZE paradigm at the individual and collective level. It is based on the understanding that human existence is a composition of four dimensions—soul, heart, mind and body, expressed as aspirations, emotions, thoughts and sensations. This individual multidimensionality reflects the collective arena, which is composed of micro, meso, macro and meta dimensions, in the form of individuals, communities, countries and planet earth.

Individual wellbeing is the cause and consequence of collective welfare, due to four principles that influence the individual and the collective sphere: change, connection, continuity and complementarity. One without the other is not sustainable. Aid must be designed and delivered with the ambition of holistic support that considers not only each dimension but contributes to the optimisation of their mutual interplay, the ultimate ambition being to lift individuals everywhere to fulfill their potential.

Introduction

When something is shattered to pieces, it cannot be fixed. The scenario that emerged as 2020 moved through the pain of COVID-19 is, on the one hand, very different from the societal setting that existed before the pandemic; on the other hand, the worst part of the pandemic derives from the prevalence of a situation that has lingered for centuries.

Trust is damaged and inequity expanded.ⁱ In some ways, the confidence that many people had in the systems they took for granted is now gone. From one day to the next, social gatherings, shopping, outdoor activities and travel turned from ordinary necessities to high-risk luxuries. Around the world, governments, including those of the richest nations, were overwhelmed, failing to respond on the spot to a crisis that was prone to happen sooner rather than later. In other ways, the pandemic has pulled back the veil of a systemic social paradox that has been lingering for too long. A few have (too) much, while many survive on a bare minimum. The COVID-19 conundrum puts everyone at risk of infection, yet the outcomes of that risk, and even the level of exposure to it, are heavily influenced by a person's socio-economic status. Inequity has been growing under the radar. The pandemic has put it, and us, on the spot.

2020 showed that the modus operandi of the past is inadequate. COVID-19 confronts us with the need for something different, because doing more of the same yields more of the same. Today's challenge is to

neither pick up the shards and patch them together into something makeshift, nor come up with more of the same that failed before. Can we create something new?

The new normal entails an emergency that engulfs large parts of society. It illustrates that a shift away from the patchwork approach of aid to a holistic understanding of support is needed; an all-encompassing 360-degree vision of short-term interventions, medium-term investments and long-term cooperation. Following a brief overview of the present context, we will look at the parameters that underpin the propositions in this paper, at the individual level and in the collective sphere. This is followed by a deeper dive into the logic underneath, which outlines a dynamic from the inside out and from the outside in. We conclude with a summary and way forward for a post-pandemic world that is worth living.

POZE, the paradigm shift that is presented in these pages, may appear radical and yet it merely unites within a coherent framework thus far disconnected elements that were found in different disciplines over the past centuries. Nothing new is in it, yet the applied outcome can be a game-changer.ⁱⁱ A brief view of the status quo makes it blatantly clear why such change is needed.

Context

COVID-19 is a reminder that humans around the world are fundamentally all the same; the result of four dimensions—soul, heart, mind and body, which find their expression in aspirations, emotions, thoughts and sensations. Thus, the unfolding situation may either serve as a social equaliser, because it affects people independently from their passport, income, skin colour, gender and skills, or it may cultivate a groundswell of drastic disconnection. Everyone is affected by the coronavirus and the measures to contain it, directly or indirectly; yet the way in which individuals are impacted by the situation varies dramatically, on a physical, mental, social and material level.⁴⁴ The present discrepancy of equal exposure/unequal outcome derives from the systemic setting that we have been evolving in, individually and collectively over the past centuries.

Until March 2020, it was possible for many people and governments to ignore the division that marks society. No longer, “because now, in the era of the virus, a poor person’s sickness can affect a wealthy society’s health” (Roy 2020), COVID-19 does not discriminate between those who get infected—from stars to subway workers, housewives to academics, and beyond gender and paychecks, across nations and literacy levels, people fall sick, some of them fatally. It is a context that is prone to panic and fear, to isolation and xenophobia. But the experience that sick people and their families go through depends on money and location. If you are poor and/or live in a low-income neighbourhood, your chances of getting severely sick or dying are significantly heightened, while the likelihood of quality healthcare diminishes dramatically. The universality of impact coupled with the unequal chances of survival is a prime illustration of the systemic social paradox that has shaped our collective existence for centuries. Reality unfolds into a frail scenario in which few have a lot and many have (too) little, while the sum of resources would suffice to cover everyone’s essential needs. A shock like COVID-19 dismantles that feeble framework.

Addressing this paradox, which may appear like a Gordian knot, begins at the core of the core, at the centre of the smallest entity of our collective existence. Solving the conundrum that COVID-19 has placed in our hands begins with the aspiration of individual beings (Walther 2020c).

Individuals will influence what happens next. There are, and always have been, many factors that are out of our control. COVID-19 has brutally reminded us that whatever illusion of steadiness and homeostasis we had, it was nothing more than a temporary grip on a glitchy, morphing, dissolving and ever-evolving reality—which is by its own nature out of control. We cannot control the spheres in which we operate, but we can control how we operate in them, including with whom we interact and how. The influence that derives from these interactions influences the ultimate outcome within and among these spheres. This may seem contradictory, but it is not. Uncertainty seems to be the name of the game these days; but it always was that way.

COVID-19 has merely revealed that everything can change, always and unexpectedly. Amid this omnipresent uncertainty we can, however, identify and influence the factors of certitude that exist. Four principles apply to individuals and society alike:

1. Connection: everything is linked to everything else; nothing happens in a vacuum.
2. Change: everything always evolves; nothing stays the same forever.
3. Continuum: everything is part of a whole; nothing occurs secluded from the rest.
4. Complementarity: everything needs something else to be complete; no phenomenon occurs without a counterpart that may be its opposite.

Internally, the interaction between our aspirations, emotions, thoughts and sensations influences who and how we are, what we do, and how we interact with our environment. Externally, the mutual interplay between individuals and institutions shapes the society that we evolve in, and the individuals in it. A word on each of these dimensions follows as the basic structure to organise subsequent reflections.

The ongoing interplay within this multidimensional kaleidoscope influences who we are, and what we do individually and as part of a group. These interactions between individuals and their environment shape society, which impacts the individuals that constitute it in return (Walther 2020a). A word on each of these dimensions—the individual and the collective arena—follows as the basic structure of subsequent reflections.

Individual dimensions

Our present mindset and personality (who we are) influences how we experience the world. And how we experience our environment influences how we express ourselves in it (what we do). It is a two-way road, whereby our physical action is influenced by our mental set-up and vice versa (Doidge 2011). The aspirations that underpin our actions (why we do something) motivate our decisions far beyond the rational sphere, and impact the context in which we live (where we are).

Since Plato, philosophers have described the decision-making process as either rational or emotional (Lehrer 2010). However, neuroscientific findings increasingly prove that our best decisions are a blend of both feeling and reason, depending on the situation. To influence decision-making processes, it is crucial to not only think about what we feed the brain, but also carefully reflect on how the different parts of the brain respond. Within this perspective, it is important to consider an additional angle: error. Research shows the existence of ‘systematic’ errors within the machinery of cognition, which cause irrational choices independent of ‘corruption’ by emotions (Damasio 2012). What we think and do leaves physical traces in our mental hardware (Doidge 2011). Emotions are fundamental in determining our opinions, decisions and deriving from them our behaviour. Thoughts and emotions influence each other mutually.

Let us look at the four dimensions that matter within this internal dynamic. The soul represents the essence of who we are.^{iv} It is the core of our being and embodies our aspirations. The desire to find meaning in everyday existence influences what we feel, think and do (Frankl 1946). The quest of why, the need of purpose, is anchored here. It naturally relates to connection with other beings, and the inherent desire of a shared existence, which involves the sharing of resources (Nowak 2011).

The second dimension relates to our emotions. Metaphorically speaking, they are of the heart. They influence how we feel about ourselves, others and life overall. Who we are and what we do is only partially the result of rational choices; our decisions are significantly influenced by our emotions (Lehrer 2007).

Emotions are commonly defined as “any conscious or unconscious experience characterised by intense mental activity”.^v Physiologically speaking, these mental activities are mostly processed in the amygdala part of the brain (Bzdok et al. 2012). They can be understood, influenced and used systematically in the process of personal and collective change dynamics.

In basic terms, emotions can be considered and studied as “simple patterned behavioral and physiological responses to specific stimuli” (Gratch and Marsella 2003). Increasingly, however, neural and psychological research suggests that there is a tight integration of emotional and cognitive processes, with emotions playing a central role in cognition and decision-making (Damasio and Descartes 1994).

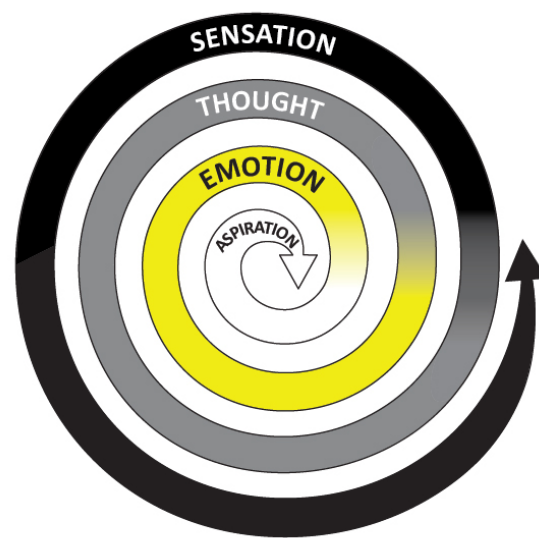
The third dimension of our being is the mind. Thoughts influence our emotions and aspirations, our physical experiences and expressions, and are influenced by them (Kahnemann 2007). Thoughts, ideas and beliefs result from a complex mix of genetic disposition, education, beliefs, memories, upbringing and environment. Anchored mostly in the mind, they are influenced by hardware features such as neurological pathways, hormones, blood supply, nutrition, et cetera; and by software factors such as our past and present expressions and experiences. Thus, they stand in constant connection with the rest of our being. How we think in the present is not only influenced by who we currently are as a person; it is influenced by our past being, and it influences who we evolve into in the future.

The fourth dimension is the body, which is on the one hand the outer shell that connects and separates our internal and external realm; on the other, a channel through which we relate to the world. What happens in the physical space directly impacts our mental and emotional evolution. As an interface between the inside and the outside, the body allows us to experience the world and express ourselves in it, including in relationship to other human beings. Physiological aspects experienced via our senses influence how we think and feel. The signals taken in by our senses are direct, such as heat or colours, and indirect, such as words and the gestures of others; they are external,

looking at the outside, and internal, reflecting body signals such as pain or hunger. Furthermore, invisible factors such as the state of our microbiome, blood-sugar level, hormone balance, immune system, et cetera affect our ability to reason, our mood and our attitude toward the world (Gordon 2009).

Nothing happens in a vacuum; the body reflects our internal circumstances. Conversely, our experience of the environment impacts our internal circumstances, shaping our perspective of the world and thereby our reaction to it. Whatever happens at the centre radiates out, like a stone cast into the water. Whichever state our internal realm is in—our emotions and thoughts, which are influenced by our aspirations—impacts our perception of and interaction with the outside world (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Spiral soul to body



Everything is connected, from the inside out and from the outside in. Our soul finds its expression in our aspirations. These influence the heart, which is the source of our emotions. How we feel impacts our mind. How and what we think impacts our overall wellbeing, and our behavior. From the inside out and from the outside in. The body is the interface between our inner and outer realities. Experiences influence our mind and heart, our thoughts and feelings. Physical experiences influence our inner realm, while the latter shapes what our expressions, our attitudes, and our behavior in the outside world is and will be.

Life is like a mirror. Whatever happens around us has a counterpart inside of us; inversely, what happens inside has a matching part outside. The four dimensions that influence our personal experiences and expressions reflect the four-dimensional dynamic that shape society to which we now turn.

Collective dimensions

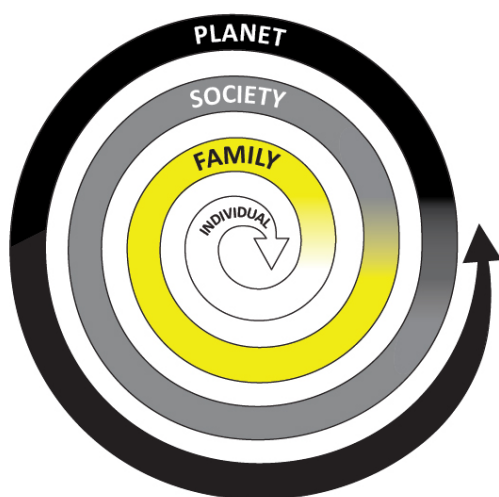
The micro level refers on the one hand to the four-dimensional internal composition of every individual's being. On the other, it relates to the fundamental component that every individual represents in society. Every person is at the same time part of various meso-

entities, different types of institutions and communities (for example, family, church, workplace, school, political party or sports club). These meso-entities organise and unite individuals within entities that have a group identity, distinguishing them from others; they also function as an intermediary between the individual person and the subsequent macro level; the latter encompasses the economic, political and cultural spheres that we, and our lives, evolve in. Respectively and combined, these three dimensions form part of the meta-dimension which also covers nature. It should be noted here that the meta level includes supra-national organisations and entities such as the United Nations, which have a global mandate and impact (Figure 2).

Micro, meso, macro and meta dimensions mutually influence and shape each other. Whatever happens in one dimension has repercussions within and upon the other ones—immediately or eventually, directly or indirectly.

How we deal with this set-up is a matter of choice. We can focus on one dimension, while leaving aside the others. Alternatively, we have the possibility to put the panoply of pieces into a holistic vision, which capitalises on synergy, and systematically influences their causal interplay. We can leave the outcome of the constellations that influence our existence to pure chance. Then again, we can choose to consciously influence them in view of results that lead us closer to our medium-term and final goals. Acknowledging, analysing, appreciating and methodically addressing the twice four-dimensional dynamic that shapes our reality is challenging, but possible. It may appear like an overwhelming endeavour to look beyond personal interests, and, in the case of governments, national interests. Yet, what we know and have grants us a power that is far beyond anything previously imaginable.

Figure 2: Spiral from individual to planet



In the perspective of the present prism, individuals are at the same time a unit that forms part of a whole, and a four-dimensional entity that is ruled by the same interconnected dynamics that determine the collectivity which it is part of.

This cycle of mutual influence is ongoing and constant. Aspirations influence emotions. Emotions influence thoughts, therefore decisions. Decisions result in expressions that involve sensations, forming experiences. Together, these elements create memories. If repeated many times, recreated patterns become habits that gradually result in certain character traits, which in turn trigger certain emotions during certain situations. It is a spiral that operates in both directions, from the inside out and from the outside in.

Once we understand the dynamics that underpin our own behaviour, we start to understand the behaviour of others. This two-fold understanding enables us to influence both our own behaviour and others'. An all-encompassing understanding of human behaviour is a major asset to optimise our behaviour in view of our own happiness, the happiness of others and the overall functioning of the communities that we are part of.

Every day is a test whether we are mature enough to use our own personal influence for a common good.

The logic underneath

The following is a succinct overview of the multidisciplinary foundation that this paradigm and the related change methodology draw upon.

When our soul, heart, mind and body are aligned we enter a state of inner peace, from which the harmonisation of our relationships with others flows effortlessly. Understanding the direct and indirect impact that the interplay of aspirations, emotions, thoughts and sensations has on ourselves, and on our environment, allows us to systematically develop the influence that we need. Instead of being influenced, we influence. The results of such multidisciplinary cognisance are to our own benefit and can be turned to the benefit others.

Change from the inside out

Neuroimaging shows the physiological construct that connects thoughts, emotions and physical feelings within shared neural networks. There is a functional architecture of diverse mental states that were previously seen as intangible. The brain perceives our mental states through situated conceptualisations, which combine three sources of stimulation (Barrett 2009). The first is sensory stimulation from the world outside the skin. Exteroceptive sensory signals come from light, vibrations, chemicals, sound, et cetera. The second type of stimulation comes from interoceptive sensory signals within the body (the internal milieu, which includes the microbiome that resides in the gut and has a direct connection to the brain). The third source of stimulation is prior experience, also referred

to as memory or category knowledge, which the brain makes available in part by the re-activation of sensory and motor neurons (Bzdok et al. 2012).

These three sources—sensations from the world, sensations from the body, and prior experience—are continually available. The neurological networks that process them can be thought of as the basic ingredients that form all mental processes. Whatever we experience as emotion, cognition or perception results from the combination and weighting of these ingredients. In contrast to previous beliefs, recent studies show that there is not one network for each emotion or even for the experience of emotion versus cognition. Rather, they are all part of the same network, a living spiderweb that connects every aspect of our inner and outer experience of that state called reality (Barrett 2006). Humans have evolved to decode their environment (Fliesler 2017). We unconsciously analyse what is happening long before cognitive judgement sets in. Built into the hardware of our body and brain, this intricate mechanism allows us to sense approaching events that would otherwise evade our awareness (Lehrer 2010); alerting us to patterns in our environment that are so subtle we cannot consciously detect them. The resulting ‘gut instinct’ is crucial for survival, but fallible. The brain’s ability for pattern recognition and pattern identification may trigger suspicion of unfamiliar things or cause us to be overly reactive to people who remind us of someone (Dhaliwal 2011). The interpretation we make of an event depends on our prevailing mindset, which is influenced by both our past experiences, including upbringing and education, and current exposure to influences such as opinions and social currents.

During the first months of a child’s life, only the right frontal lobe is active. It is this brain component that will eventually specialise in visual–spatial perception, creativity and emotions. During the initial phase of life, we experience and express our emotions directly (Goleman 1995), because the inhibition of the left frontal lobe is not yet coming into play. Our internal filter mechanisms are still being established. A baby cries when it’s unhappy and laughs when it’s happy, without a detour via the learned ‘right/wrong’ department of social expectation. As we grow up, our being shifts attention from the world to the self. Gradually, we are not just reacting to the world, but proactively acting in it.

Daniel Kahneman’s explanation of two parallel yet complementary thought systems helps us to understand how to use intuition with care (Kahneman 2011). ‘System 1’ is fast, instinctive and emotional, used in situations requiring fast reaction because we face (or seem to face) immediate danger. ‘System 2’ is slower, more deliberative and logical. While the first is automatic, the second needs concentration and agency to process thoughts. It is part of the conscious self, which makes choices, has reasons and holds beliefs.

In the same way in which the intake and analyses of sensorial inputs happens via a spiderweb that embraces the whole body, the brain is far more versatile than presumed for a long time (Kahneman 2011). The right/left separation that was long considered as a valid schematisation of the brain’s operating system is only part of the answer. Recent evidence is consistent with a psychological constructionist approach of the mind: a set of interacting brain regions commonly involved in basic psychological operations of both an emotional and non-emotional nature are active during emotion experience and perception across a range of discrete emotion categories (Lindquist et al. 2012).^{vi}

Furthermore, the brain can change its own structure and function in response to mental experience, due to neuroplasticity (Doidge 2007). The brain’s capacities are dynamic and trainable: “The brain is a far more open system than we ever imagined, and nature has gone very far to help us perceive and take in the world around us. It has given us a brain that survives in a changing world by changing itself.”

Change from the outside in

Action and attitude shape each other, and hereby our emotions. When we aspire to be kind, generous, patient or a good listener, then we can start to induce this character trait long before it feels like a natural manifestation of our character. The brain is our best friend when it comes to the design and implementation of who we want to be.

The outside-in change dynamic works in smaller and larger ways. On the one hand, bodily posture impacts our physical, mental and emotional status. It influences our mood, memory, behaviour and stress levels. It not only eases the symptoms of depression but lessens self-focus (Cuddy 2015). Physiologically speaking, a physical pose that reflects an attitude of power—upright, square shoulders and head up—sends a signal to the brain; a neural impulse which turns into an actual, physiological response that boosts brainpower. Furthermore, posture affects hormone levels—decreasing cortisol and increasing testosterone, the latter being associated with self-confidence (Veenstra et al. 2017). On the other hand, our action impacts our experiences and memories which eventually reshapes our mindset; both metaphorically and practically speaking.

The best way to become part of social change is to be proactive.

The best way to become part of social change is to be proactive, plunging into new projects and activities, interacting with very different kinds of people, and experimenting with unfamiliar ways of getting things done (Ibarra 2015). The traditionally assumed logical

sequence—think, then act—is often reversed in a personal change process. Paradoxically, we only increase our self-knowledge in the process of making changes.

Priming new habits can begin with actions that are performed consciously, even if the underlying motivation is not intuitive. Gradually, the resulting experiences will result in new habit patterns in the mind. Especially in times of transition and uncertainty, thinking and introspection may follow physical experimentation—not only vice versa. Transformation involves action, which is likely to cause discomfort if the intended change requires the individual to move out of their comfort zone. Actually, it is only outside of this zone's border that personal change occurs. As these new unacquainted behaviours are performed repeatedly, they induce changes in the physical brain circuitry thanks to neuroplasticity (Doidge 2007), which makes them ever more permanent until they feel 'normal'.

Social norms, or mores, which are the unwritten rules of behaviour considered acceptable in a group or society, result from the interplay between beliefs and behaviour, between individuals and larger communities (Bicchieri 2017). In the same way that poverty and violence are condoned in some parts of the world, avoiding and addressing these issues individually and collectively can become a new norm.

Humans are hardwired to cooperate, and whatever one does for others has benefits in both directions—for the one who acts and the one who's acted for. Moreover, benefits of pro-social action occur on four levels. The very act of giving back to the community boosts a person's happiness, health and sense of physical wellbeing (Plante 2012). Beyond benefit for the one who acts and the one who is acted for, others who witness altruistic acts experience renewed hope, appeasement and the desire to take similar action (Ramey 2016). From such an expanding attitude of kindness and care among individuals, society overall benefits as the occurrence and acceptability of inequality and deprivation shrink.

Conclusions: Revealing common ground

There are various ways to build connections between people, including surface commonalities such as nationality, language, gender, skin colour, hobbies, professions, et cetera. Depending on context, these same aspects that serve as connectors among the people of one group may become features of separation within groups and between one group and another. This has been understood and used by politicians and activists throughout time.

Untouched by these surface-linkages and separations runs the undercurrent that joins human beings across times and borders, generations and socio-economic conditions. The universal foundation that connects us are the four dimensions of our individual existence, the building blocks of humankind: soul, heart, mind and body, which find their expression as aspirations, emotions, thoughts and sensations.

No matter who you are and where you come from, how we experience the world around us, and what we do in reaction to this experience, depends on these four dimensions and their interplay.

As seen in this paper, every human being has wants and needs, feelings and thoughts; as well as painful and pleasant experiences. COVID-19 has reminded us that we are all the same. In contrast to AIDS, which served for a long time to further enshrine the stigma of certain so-called high-risk categories, such as homosexuality and drug use; and in contrast to Ebola, which only affected countries in Africa (with some exceptions), the coronavirus does not spare anyone.

If nothing else, the virus may push us out of our mental comfort zone.

If nothing else, the virus may push us out of our mental comfort zone; snap us out of the lukewarm slumber that made us believe that we are different, better, worthier and—subliminally spoken—less at risk. Being aware of our common foundation, we can shape our lives rather than be puppets pushed under by the torrential current of a crisis.

Everything is connected. Micro-level optimisation conditions the optimisation of collective dynamics. How individuals, institutions, countries and the planet interact simultaneously and cross-dimensionally determines society. Designing, developing and decorating the post-COVID-19 architecture depends on interplays as much as it derives from the respective components. Whichever road is pursued post-COVID-19, a careful balance of the risks and benefits that derive from the chosen path must precede the shifts. Assessment and action must use the prism of mutual interplays.

Our failure to prevent and prepare for an epidemiological disaster such as COVID-19 should serve as a springboard to set up and learn a solid systemic response, a cyber-epidemiological plan for the virtual space. One cannot improve the past, but it would be stupid not to project ourselves into the future.

On the optimistic side, we now have a vast panoply of technological tools at our disposition.

On the optimistic side, we now have a vast panoply of technological tools at our disposition. We are better connected and potentially better coordinated than ever before in history. And the physical and nutritional status of most people is much better than a century ago when populations in Europe emerged from World War I, many significantly weakened by malnutrition and deprivation.

We know more, have more and can do more than ever before. Today's 7.8-billion-dollar question is whether we will use this knowledge and capacity not just for our own sake, but as part of a holistic perspective—serving everyone and hereby ourselves. The fundamental question that underpins what comes next is whether we are ready to:

1. acknowledge that each of us is driven by instinct and inclined to follow the path of the least (mental) effort; and
2. accept that we have the choice to overcome that instinct in favour of a pro-active initiative to connect for good.

COVID-19 has brought challenges, but it does not mean the end of the world; it is merely the end of the world that we knew. It may sound strange, but we have been lucky this time around. The toll of COVID-19 is heavy for humans and the economy, but it could have been worse. Imagine a breakdown of the internet simultaneous to the economic downturn and the upheaval of national healthcare systems.

However, after the crisis will be before the crisis. We must seize this wake-up call to get ready for the next time, individually and collectively. Can we create a system that lifts people up to unfold their potential?

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Walther, C 2020c, *Development and connection in times of COVID: Corona's call for conscious choices*, Springer Nature/Macmillan Palgrave, New York

Endnotes

i Equity is based on the idea of moral equality, the principle that people should be treated as equals. It refers to the notion that, despite many differences, all people share a common humanity or human dignity and, as a result of this, we must consider how each of them should be treated. It is not the same as treating people equally, as we shall see; rather, it is the idea that all count in the moral calculus (Jones 2009). While inequality may derive from objective differences such as height or age, inequity is the moral judgement that disadvantages people based on these differences.

ii For details, please refer to the three books that were published by Springer Nature in 2020: *Development, Humanitarian aid and social welfare: Social change from the inside out*, *Humanitarian work, social change and human behavior: Compassion for change and Development and connection in the times of COVID: Corona's call for conscious choices*.

iii Even though the virus affects everyone, and though everyone can get infected, who de facto gets sick and how much individuals and their family are impacted is heavily determined by inequity in general, and racial inequity in particular. COVID-19 figures that are broken down by race are difficult to come by due to political resistance; however, available figures are disturbing. In many majority-white countries, people from other ethnic and racial groups have less access to economic resources; an economic vulnerability which often translates to poorer health outcomes. As of April 2020, in Chicago 72% of people who died of coronavirus were black, although only one-third of the city's population is. In the UK, of the first 2249 patients with confirmed COVID-19, 35% were non-white; though the proportion of non-white people in England and Wales is only 14% (Ro 2020). Similar discrepancies were registered in other countries, such as South Africa, Australia or Ecuador, where being in a racial minority is mirrored by economic hardship. These figures do not illustrate that certain genetic circumstances make one race more vulnerable than another to contract the disease and/or to die from it; rather they offer a dire socio-economic x-ray of our society.

iv In its most basic sense, the word 'soul' means 'life', either physical or eternal (Merriam Webster). The primary distinction between soul and spirit in man is that the soul is the animate life, or the seat of the senses, desires, affections and appetites, whereas the spirit is commonly used as a reference to the part in humans that seek a connection to God.

v See Cabanac (2002): "Emotion is any mental experience with high intensity and high hedonic content (pleasure/displeasure)."

vi Since the onset of psychology, experts have wondered which parts of the brain are responsible for which functions. Commonly, two theories are under discussion: the locationist approach (that is, the hypothesis that discrete emotion categories consistently and specifically correspond to distinct brain regions) and the psychological constructionist approach (that is, the hypothesis that discrete emotion categories are constructed of more general brain networks not specific to those categories). Recent evidence supports the latter (Lindquist et al. 2012).