

# Psychosynthesis And The Laws Of Group Life

By John W. Cullen, Ph.D.

One of my main purposes has been to take the inspirations provided by the Tibetan and step them down for practical applications at the exoteric level. A major application has been to employ the "Laws of Group Life" described in *Esoteric Psychology, Volume II* to group dynamics for management groups.<sup>1</sup>

When we talk about group dynamics, we are concerned with the forces in a group that result in some effect. There are principles that are universal which operate at all group levels. These principles will have different effects depending upon the level of consciousness of the group. What are some of the basic universal principles of group life that deal with any group?

## Law Of Sacrifice<sup>2</sup>

The first principle deals with the question of what one has to relinquish to be a member of a group. It does not matter whether it is good or bad. It is a basic law like  $E = MC^2$ . It can have negative or positive consequences, but it will happen. Learning about group dynamics involves being aware of principles and then asking how this principle is functioning in the group. Other questions could relate to what do we have to sacrifice to be a member of this group. What must we give up? We cannot escape this principle of relinquishment but we can begin to see its application at different levels. For example, individuality is always affected to some degree by being a member of a group. The reptilian brain finds this difficult, while the mammalian brain finds it easy. In groups at the prepersonal level, this would be a great source of conflict.

As we move to the transpersonal level, we sacrifice the personality to the Higher Self.

Without transpersonal consciousness we do not have true group consciousness. The more we contact the transpersonal, the more we are conscious of the group. In effect we are more conscious of other Higher Selves linking with our Higher Self.

Sacrifice need not be related to pain. Every time we give up something, we gain something. Old ways of looking at sacrifice associated it with pain. Growth is a series of relinquishments. For example, as we become integrated personalities, there is a sacrifice of the outer-directedness of the ego. We give up our concern for pleasing others and seeking approval. The integrated personality thereby relinquishes dependence on others and becomes independent. This is a major stage of growth that everyone must go through.

If we look at sacrifice from the standpoint of the Maslow hierarchy, we see other analogies. At the subpersonality level, people give things up for things to get their lower needs satisfied. As they move into the more integrated personality-type group, they give up those needs for approval and are more concerned about the higher-order needs. When we move into the transpersonal area, the needs for achievement and self-actualization are given up. Satisfaction of the needs for self-actualization would not be the prime concern in a transpersonal group. Those needs may still be there, but they are not the prime motivators.

From a psychosynthesis standpoint, personal psychosynthesis involves the relinquishing of subpersonality and ego needs and development of the integrated centered personality. Transpersonal psychosynthesis involves the integration of the personality and

the Higher Self and ultimately the relinquishing of personal needs to fulfill the purpose of the Higher Self. Of course, whenever we enter any group, we bring with us all of these levels. The higher our consciousness, the more we are able to relinquish the lower. All these levels are still there, but we can consciously choose to relinquish them. This is a conscious application of the law of sacrifice rather than an unconscious response to it. When we are unconscious of this process, we regret the loss. When we are conscious, we rejoice.

From the standpoint of group dynamics, we may have individuals with different levels of consciousness as members of the group who need to sacrifice different aspects. In one sense, the lower the level, the more difficult it is to relinquish. As consciousness elevates, people consciously attempt to relinquish lower aspects of consciousness. The group leader in the future must be aware of these dynamics and the different contingencies involved.

Each step in the evolution of consciousness involves a mastery of one level and then the giving up of that in order to move on to another level. Once we accept this, we can truly be facilitators of evolution. We must continually ask ourselves: "What do I need to master, and what do I need to give up?" The answers to these questions will be determined by our own levels of consciousness.

Evolution utilizes this principle. The lower sacrifices for the higher. The mineral world sacrifices for the vegetable world. The vegetable world cannot survive without the nourishment provided by the mineral world. The vegetable world sacrifices for the animal world. They give up so that the animal kingdom can survive. All three of them sacrifice for us. Then, of course, as we are not the end product of evolution, we need to explore what we need to sacrifice for the next higher level. What do we need to give up for the next step in evolution?

This is a broad concept. We can, though, bring it down to very specific practical applications.

### **Law Of Magnetic Impulse <sup>3</sup>**

This principle can function individually. As the transpersonal is connected, there is an attraction to more transpersonal identification with the higher level, to move up to it. In thinking of this from a symbolic level, this kind of energy is necessary for a group. Groups would not stay together without this magnetic impulse. The magnetism can be shattered if a significant person in the group does something. An example is Synano, who/which had a tremendous magnetic impulse. Initially it was for people who were not functioning in the world. They were dope addicts and were attracted to Synanon at the very lowest level. They had no other place to go. Their attraction was survival, and this was the only place where they could survive. The magnetic impulse then became centered around the leader who held everything together. People were attracted to him at both emotional and mental levels. Jim Jones had the same impact.

As we move into the transpersonal group, it is no longer individualistic, but rather the magnetic impulse is bringing together the individuals in the group at a transpersonal level. We could even go higher and see this magnetic impulse functioning between groups. Groups become attracted to each other and even form something in a creative synthesis. That could be horizontal or vertical attraction. There is some thought that humanity as a group is being attracted to a higher and wiser group, and as this energy is created, there is a greater attractive force between them. The magnetic impulse is a form of synthesis which brings together all the diversities. It is that which holds nations together.

Each individual can explore the law of magnetic impulse by asking such questions as: "What attracts me to the group? How does the group maintain its cohesiveness? What is a symbol of group unity?" At the personality level this may be the main attractive force. The emotional attachment may be the main force where the relationships between people is the key. This attraction would be mechanistic rather than organic.

At the level of the integrated personality, the attraction becomes more organic. There are more choices available. Participative management is an example of this principle where we are attracting the ideas of other people. It is more of a system with all of the parts interacting in the magnetic manner.

At the transpersonal level the attraction would be more toward group purpose. It would be like the marriage of souls, inter-soul unity. The law of magnetic impulse is also associated with the attractive force of love. At the transpersonal level this would manifest as unconditional love. Intuition is related to this principle. At the personal level intuition attracts ideas from above, while in a transpersonal group the group intuition attracts ideas for improvement for the betterment of humanity.

The symbol of the light overhead relates to this principle. Just as the sun holds all the planets in their orbits by magnetism and gravity, the Higher Self is a point of attraction. So that if we meditate, we may attract circumstances and the right kind of people to us.

We can perceive the solar system as a group with the sun being the major attractive force. We can learn about groups utilizing the Hermetic principle of "as above so below." As we learn about groups at that level, we may also learn something about the solar system and vice versa.

#### **Law Of Service** <sup>4</sup>

The third principle has to do with service. Service has many meanings and can also be interpreted through the spectrum of consciousness. At the pre-personal level, it may be self-serving. The service performed by the group is basically self-serving. It might involve manipulation, or maybe the service the group performs is to make us feel important by being a member of the group. There may be the service of being recognized by the service the group does. We can provide very high humanitarian service, but the main service may be to make a person feel important. This

is an important point to be recognized--that a group might provide valuable service but yet be supported by serving the lower order needs of its members.

The main question to ask with respect to this principle is: "What service does this group perform? What service do I perform in the group?" Service can be related to the Maslow hierarchy. The service might be from a transpersonal aspect. The service might be to meditate together as a group to create this magnetic impulse, and we serve humanity by attracting ideas that can be radiated out to humanity.

There are certain transpersonal groups whose primary function is to do just that. Other groups may serve something greater. Some serve to a greater whole. Nonattachment to results is also a characteristic of transpersonal groups. A group may also serve in the healing area. This may involve radiating healing energy to the planet or to national leaders in a non-demanding, nonattached manner. Another differentiation is the time perspective of service. Most groups are primarily concerned with the present. Things need to be done right now. We have immediate urgent problems. A task needs to be accomplished, and we will devote energy to the current task.

Some transpersonal groups orient their service to the future. It does not mean that they are not concerned about the present, but most transpersonal groups are in the process of preparing for the future. They are not spending much energy on current problems that have to be fixed. Their concern is long-range planning. Robert Gerard's Integral Psychology group is an example of this where they are planning for and developing a psychology for the 21st century. In a sense many transpersonal groups are preparing the groundwork for the future. They are seeding and preparing to bear the fruit, but they are not picking the fruit right now. They are inaugurators; their service is to inaugurate something new and their guideline is to prepare the blueprint. This is analogous to the

plan of the Higher Self. The Higher Self has a blueprint, and if we are fortunate enough, we can begin to tap into that blueprint.

Service becomes a very significant way of defining a group. Every group has a service. As we begin to define these service areas for ourselves, we can see them from an evolutionary standpoint. Is this service that we or the group are performing at this time appropriate? Is it completed? Many groups continue to serve in a way that is no longer appropriate; they begin something and continue to perform it when they no longer need to. The same thing can be true with a job where it was appropriate to perform it at one time, but the individual has outgrown it and the job is no longer serving. That is the time to move on.

In the Grail legend, Parsival, the knight who achieves, when he approaches the castle, is supposed to ask the question, "Who does the Grail serve?" Apparently, the reason the kingdom is falling apart is that people have the idea that the Grail is supposed to serve them as individuals. The answer to the question is that the Grail serves God--the whole, the group, all of humanity. Any time we are in contact with the Higher Self, the ideas we get or the work that we do not only benefits us but also people around us. The Higher Self always serves group needs and is always conscious of others as well as us. If we are in touch with the Higher Self, we automatically begin to serve the needs of others.

The major characteristic of the Higher Self is service. The personality, as it serves, makes more contact with the transpersonal. The more contact with the transpersonal, the more energy is provided to the personality to serve. This is a reciprocal process. The more we do, the more we contact. The more we contact, the more we do. The inner and the outer are now at one.

Service can manifest in an infinite number of ways. This is not do-gooder behavior; that is one level. There are a lot of do-gooders who do good because they get recognition for it. At another level the service is not based upon

recognition; we have no attachment to the results.

Self-serving at the sub-personality level may be just what is needed for growth at that time. Individuals may have to go through that stage in their evolution. Maybe earlier they did not even do anything for themselves. These are universal principles that manifest at all these different levels. Service at the bottom rung of the ladder may be exactly what they need to do and self-serving can be a step up in consciousness.

### **Law Of Repulses <sup>5</sup>**

The principle deals with rejection and is related to the Law of Sacrifice. There is a symbol for this depicted as an angel with a flaming sword at the gates of heaven who repulse those who are not ready to enter. In this way those who are not ready are protected from entering where they are not prepared. It is a rejection, and at the highest levels, it is the rejection of un-essentials.

The will type is characteristic of this principle and has no difficulty with this one. It manifests in the rejecting of others, rejecting the ideas of others, destroying and repulsing. At a low level it could be an individual or group that rejects anything new and the inputs of others. This level is predominantly related to the reptilian point of view; the law of magnetic impulse is more mammalian.

The positive aspects of this principle is the rejection of un-essentials, the repelling of what we do not need. There is a separatist aspect here in the sense of separating the wheat from the chaff and rejecting old ways of doing things that are no longer necessary. What excess baggage are we carrying around?

All these principles are powerful forces that function in each group. The more we are conscious of them, the more we can utilize them in a positive and constructive manner. Whatever level the group is at, there is always the possibility of elevating it. Each law is on a continuum, and, therefore, we can begin to move toward the next level of the continuum. One great lesson from this law is to become

aware of the un-essentials and undesirables that you need to reject. This law can function at the physical level where the group explores the activities that it is involved in, or at the emotional level, or at the mental level.

These concepts need to be translated into our everyday language and understanding. They are general principles that apply to every group. This energy is present, and we can learn to become aware of it, develop it, and utilize it for group growth.

### **Law Of Group Progress**

This law refers to the evolutionary path of the group. The group may have a task to do. At the most common level there would be concern as to how well the group is doing. Progress would be related to performance. Evaluation methods would be developed to measure how well the group is meeting its task goals and provide a picture of how the group has progressed, where it is now, and what are its next steps in progression.

At the pre-personal level, comparison with other groups would also be important. At the transpersonal level, there would be little interest in this. At the personality level, progress might be measured by size as in many bureaucratic institutions. One might use size from a transpersonal perspective in the sense that more and more individuals associated with the group are relating at the transpersonal level. Another aspect of this law at the personality level is the ability of the group to overpower others. Progress is measured by the degree that we are able to beat out our competitors. As we look at our society, primarily the business world, we see this law functioning all around us. This is primarily at a materialistic level.

When we look at this law from a transpersonal perspective, progress could be assessed in terms of elevation and evolution of consciousness for the members of the group or the service that is performed. There is more emphasis on quality rather than quantity.

Two other Laws are briefly described in *Esoteric Psychology II: Expansive Response*

and the Lower Four. They are not discussed in this paper as they deal with abstract concepts that are not applicable within the present framework. Readers may have some insights and suggestions regarding their applicability.

### **Exercises on Laws Of Group Life**

Think of an important group that you wish to work with. It could be a work group or a social group. Begin to ask yourself how these principles are operating in this group. You will be doing an in and out meditative exercise where you will do a reflective meditation for each principle and then a receptive meditation to obtain a symbol of where the group is now with respect to this principle.

Close your eyes and come to center. Through breathing awareness and body awareness you increase your centeredness. Take a very deep breath and breathe out any ideas and tensions that you may have. Open yourself and dedicate yourself to exploring the dynamics of the particular group that you have selected. Become more aware of it. See where it has been, where it is and where it is going. Something may emerge that will give you a clearer and deeper understanding of the group. It may bring you some new directions for the group. It may give you directions for leaving the group. Whatever it is, accept whatever you get. You will do this by going through each of the principles.

### **Sacrifice**

Think about this Principle of Sacrifice, of relinquishing, of giving up and reflect on this thought: "What must I sacrifice to become a member of this group, or what am I sacrificing? What must I give up?" Reflect on any aspect of this principle. If it is OK, and you are choosing to do that, is the sacrifice appropriate for you at this time in your life? Think about some things that you need to give up with respect to this group. "Am I not sacrificing enough, or am I sacrificing too much? Am I sacrificing just right?" When you are ready, imagine that your mind is opening up and above you is the Higher Self, a source of wisdom. The Higher Self could also be considered to be one of the

great sacrifices. The Higher Self chose to come here to be with you throughout your life. Perhaps you can receive some insights in the form of an image or symbol which tell you something about this group with respect to the Principle of Sacrifice. What does the Higher Self tell you about what you or the group needs to do? When you have this, take some time to sketch it and write whatever you need to write.

### **Law of Magnetic Impulse**

You will now explore the second principle which is the Law of Magnetic Impulse. Close your eyes and take in another deep breath to energize yourself and breathe out anything that you need to breathe out. Reflect on this principle as it relates to the group that you are examining. There are many possible reflections: "What attracts me to the group? How cohesive is the group? What holds the group together? How does this group attract others? How does it attract ideas? Is the group too cohesive or not cohesive enough? What can be done to unite the group?" After reflecting, imagine the point of light above your head, the Higher Self. Your mind opens up to the sun of the Higher Self, the sun that is that great magnetic center which attracts to it and maintains the balance of the planets. Imagine a magnetic attraction between the Higher Self and the personality, two points magnetized and reaching toward each other, the personality moving up, the Higher Self moving down. Allow a symbol or image to emerge which will provide you with some insight as to the operation of the Law of Magnetic Impulse as it functions in the group that you are studying. Ask for some guidance as to what needs to be done, or what is the nature of the attracting force. Is it Love? Take some time to sketch the symbol and make a few notes on your reflections.

### **Service**

This time you are going to reflect on the third principle, The Law of Service. Once again as you raise your consciousness, begin to think about service. Explore the service that the

group performs. "What service do I perform in the group? What new areas of service are possible? Is there a transpersonal aspect to this service?" Go inside now and explore the symbolic significance of this principle. Once again imagine that your mind is opening up, and above you is a new symbol of the Higher Self. It is a man with a pot of water. The Higher Self can be defined as service. As you open yourself up to the Higher Self, you become more service-oriented, and the more you serve, the more the Higher Self is able to contact you. So imagine this man above with a pot of water signifying the transpersonal aspect of service. Just allow any images or symbols to emerge relating to this Law of Service. What does the Higher Self have to tell you about service with respect to the group? Again take some time to sketch the symbol and make a few notes.

### **Repulse**

Go inside again and close your eyes. Take a very deep breath and eject any of the air that you do not need. Begin your exploration of the Law of Repulse. Synonyms are rejection, expulsions, destruction. There are many questions that you can ask. "What do I reject about the group? Is there anything undesirable about the group? What un-essentials need to be repulsed? Is the group carrying any excess baggage? Is the group too rejecting, or is it too open and not rejecting enough?" Once again go inside to explore your symbolic picture of the Law of Repulse. Experience your mind opening up, and a new symbol of the Higher Self appearing. It is an angel with a flaming sword. This is the destroying angel. It guards the gates of paradise. It turns away those who are not ready. It rejects, but in the process of rejecting, it protects. The destroying angel is a protector. Maintaining that symbolism, just allow symbols, thoughts or images to emerge. These will provide you with insights regarding the Law of Repulse for your group, what needs to be done or a current picture. Again make a sketch of the symbol and write down any notes that you wish.

## Group Progress

You will now explore the Law of Group Progress that deals with elevation. Stand up and raise your arms and stretch to begin to prime yourself for elevation at the physical level. Make yourself comfortable and take a deep breath. Feel the elevation of your chest as you breathe in. Go inside. This time you are going to reflect on the Law of Group Progress. Imagine that you are on a path with other members of this group. This path leads to a mountain, and the entire group begins to climb it. Your concern is with elevation, and group progress has to do with elevation. As you continue up the mountain, reflect on the following questions: "How has this group grown? What is the measure of group progress? How has this group evolved? How is the group progressing on its goals?" Make notes as you go along.

Once again ask the Higher Self for a symbol relating to group progress. Close your eyes and again imagine your mind opening up. You now have a new symbol of the Higher Self, a golden triangle pointing upward and shining and radiating in all directions. This is a symbol of group progress, of evolution, pointing and moving upward. The triangle can be seen as expanding. It can represent your particular group or all of humanity. Now reflect on this group to which you want to apply this Law of Group Progress. Some of the things you might ask of the Higher Self are, "What are the next steps for the progress of this group? What are the next steps in evolution? How can it progress?" Allow symbols, images and thoughts to emerge regarding group progress as you have been inspired by this golden triangle. Take the time to sketch your symbol and make some notes.

## Summary

The Laws of Group Life provide significant insights into the evolution of humanity. This paper is a preliminary attempt to apply these laws in a practical manner. Readers are encouraged to experiment with these ideas with an existing group and also to explore

other ideas and exercises related to the above. Feedback and discussion is encouraged. Contact the author at 3308 Radcliffe Rd. Thousand Oaks, CA 91360 or by E-Mail <cullen@robles.callutheran.edu>

1. Cullen, J. and Russell, D. IAMOP Monograph No. 12-4. Building Effective Teams: An Introduction to Group Psychosynthesis. Thousand Oaks. 1990.
2. *Esoteric Psychology II*, p.87.
3. *Esoteric Psychology II*, p.109.
4. *Esoteric Psychology II*, p.118.
5. *Esoteric Psychology II*, p.147.

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