PROSPERITY ETHICS

HABITS AND VIRTUES OF SMART PEOPLE IN A CHANGING WORLD

JOHANN WALTERS & J.M. VORSTER

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Research Justification

The paradigm shift from modernism to post-modernism and the Fourth Industrial Revolution poses enormous challenges to universal moral codes and human life today. The thesis of this manuscript, with the title *Prosperity ethics – Habits and virtues of smart people in a changing world*, is that human prosperity in the broad sense of human flourishing in this new environment could be enhanced by re-defining and applying universal moral codes and practicing related habits to guide people to prosper and flourish as dignified human beings. The book represents original and innovative research. In a relevant and vigorous discourse, it engages in issues regarding morality in an age of high technology. It explores ways in which moral agents can contribute to lead post-modernist people into an environment where humans can prosper and enjoy life in a changing world where many old moral directives are not feasible anymore. This scholarly book contributes to the specific scientific discourse on studies regarding the relevant discipline. It offers a new pattern of reasoning in the field of social ethics about moral agency aiming purposely to address particular virtues and applicable habits beneficial for human prosperity and dignified life in a changing social environment. From the perspective of applied methodology, the book is the result of a comparative literary study done from the perspective of universal moral codes which flows from in-created natural law. Recent research results of empirical studies about the effects of the Fourth Industrial Revolution were consulted and applied to raise awareness of the deep-rooted changes and challenges in society today. The argumentation represents a narrative discursive style of writing. Applicable sources and studies were consulted, but the pattern of reasoning and proposals of relevant virtues and habits are those of the authors. No plagiarism has been committed throughout the research and presentation of new knowledge conducive to the ethical discourse at hand. The authors ensured the references reflect the intention not to plagiarise research of other scholars in the field of study. The book offers new knowledge and perspectives applicable to the current social-ethical discourse about prosperity of humans in a changing world. Although written in the fresh narrative style customary to post-modernist scholarship, it is a book for scholars in social ethics and moral opinion-makers in the disciplines dealing with human development.

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Abbreviations Appearing in the Text and Notes

List of Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
BDNF	Brain-derived Neurotropic Factor
CAM	Computer-aided Manufacturing
CARE	Creative, Agile, Resolute and Emphatic
CIM	Computer Integrated Manufacturing
EU	European Union
GPS	Global Positioning System
IoT	Internet of Things
NC	Network Computer
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PC	Personal Computers
PLS	Plane to Line Switching
PQO	Prolific Quality Output

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Navigating a changing world

Do you have what it would take to continue to prosper and thrive in a changing world? This question we suspect, can be formulated in many ways and we are convinced that you would have a very unique take on it. The essence is, do you have a cutting-edge character that the economy will continue to reward in a changing world. Do you possess the core competencies such as habits and virtues that you can leverage in helping you to prosper and thrive in the times ahead? If you are in doubt, then this book is for you! If you are one of the few smart people that could answer the question in the affirmative, you would anyway have a teachable spirit and your curiosity would incite you to continue reading further on!

But let's get to the essential question. Why do you have to consider the question at all? Why do you have to care whether you have a cutting-edge character that would be most responsive to the changing world? We believe that there is a compelling answer to consider. The fact of the matter is, we live in exciting

times of fundamental changes. There are global megatrends and macroeconomic and geostrategic forces that are fundamentally shaping our world and our collective prosperity. These forces are changing the way we live, work, play, with startling ramifications for our future prosperity and wellbeing. The implications of these megatrends are broad and varied and are approaching us with tremendous opportunities to seize, but they also present extremely dangerous risks and uncertainties to mitigate. Whilst these trends are full of opportunities, they are deeply unsettling and are no ordinary disruptions.

You may correctly observe that this is not the first time that a civilisation has to go through such periods of disruption and transformation. The Industrial Revolution of the late 1700s and early 1800s is still fresh in our collective memory. The difference however today, is the sheer ambiguity because the disruptive forces are appearing everywhere. Disruptions happen without pre-warning. They are much more forceful and fast in their impact and the velocity is quite mind-boggling. Estimations are that changes are currently happening 10 times faster than during the Industrial Revolution, and at 300 times the scale. This creates an impact that is more or less 3000 times higher (Dobbs et al. 2015:2). This can be illustrated by a comparison of the processes accompanying the invention of the telephone, radio and the Internet. Only after 50 years of its invention did 50% of American homes have a telephone. Radio took 38 years to draw 50 million listeners. Yet, it took Facebook a single year to gather 6 million users, a number they multiplied by 100 in 5 years (Dobbs et al. 2015:4).

The megatrends and the congruent changes have not only wide impact but are also quite severe and deep. It is estimated that as many as half of the world's Chief Executive Officers now view *uncertainty* as the single biggest external threat to their businesses (Drucker 2020:1). Ordinary people feel the burden of this uncertainty when trying to decide the right course, be it in their jobs or for their families. As the economy is becoming more globalised and changing to a more gig and shared economy, the

stability of many careers and businesses is questionable. On top of that, technological advances are paving the way for independent work. Research shows that 20% to 30% of the working-age population in the United States of America (USA) and the European Union (EU) is engaged in independent work with 70% (Bughin & Woetzel 2019:10) of those doing so out of preference (Bughin & Woetzel 2019:10). Furthermore, ordinary people begin to take on more than one vocation as the gig economy continues to grow in size. Many ordinary households benefit from the shared economy that is emerging. They start to share their vehicle(s) and become Uber driver(s) in their free time as a source of income or rent out part of their homes as Airbnb.

Half a century ago, the world was easier to navigate for one who wanted to get ahead. The baseline to earn an income and a living and to be prosperous was straightforward. All that was expected was to work hard, be loyal and you will be handsomely rewarded. Twenty years later, the baseline for prosperity has shifted and is very erratic. Many now experience this baseline as far off, obscure, unanticipated and impossible to know. What is next and what is needed to secure personal prosperity is no longer clear, and it is expected of each person to continuously change and to reinvent oneself. In other words, people have to navigate a world of disruptions. Figuring out how to navigate these skewed times requires a radical rethinking to get a grip on the disruptive forces that are changing the economy. Only then can people capitalise on the new opportunities and greater freedom that comes with it.

The question that ought to be answered therefore is what would it take to face the changing world and remain relevant and prosperous? For starters, there are some unique traits and characteristics you need to master. What is now needed in order to wholistically advancing your long-term prosperity, is to master very specific habits and virtues as standard operating principles and capacities that could empower you to face up to the challenges of a changing world.

As humans remain the real drivers of this change, the human element cannot be removed from this action. As the changes are distinctively human-led and human-centred, this book focuses on those value aspects of the human character that ought to be mastered in order to benefit from the changing world and to continue to prosper and thrive. We believe that today and more so in the future, *differentiation* will be key to continued prosperity. Companies have to differentiate themselves from competitors to remain relevant and in high demand. Likewise, individuals have to differentiate themselves by having a mindset that is open to the new narratives and a cutting-edge character that possesses the required qualities or traits to embrace the new challenges to overcome calamities and capitalise on the new unfolding opportunities. Today, you need a mindset and cutting-edge character that amplify your identity and value propositions that allow you to be recognised and standing out from a very diversified crowd. This is what we call an *abundant mindset* and a *pro-growth character*. Let's site an example. Fifty years ago, society was characterised by homogeneity. In other words, society consisted of people that were all the same. They were uniform in nature or character throughout. Today's societies are heterogenic or diverse and consist of people with different offerings, beliefs, prejudices, tastes and aversions. This requires a fundamental change in your mindset and character to remain open and approachable so that you can relate, converse and partner with others, but more importantly to differentiate you from others. Fifty years ago, societies were protected by economic boundaries and a well-established decorum and 'cycle of living' from the cradle to full maturity and retirement. This baseline has now shifted. The world is more competitive and in many ways, your existence and future prospects are unprotected and insecure. What is required today is that *differentiation must be a top priority for you.* Simply being better trained in technical proficiencies would no longer create a sustainable advantage in a changing world that is fiercely competitive because of the openness, is highly diversified in character and the protected economic boundaries have collapsed.

More so, the growing interconnectedness, changing perceptions and expectations make it vital to possess character qualities that are a robust set of unique features and traits that will empower you *to stabilise and maintain your competitive advantages*. Because only if you could meet the expectations of others that you relate, converse and partner with, in an unmatched way, you will be able to carry the day. Today, the *perceived value* that others have of you is pertinent. Perceived value is your unique contributions compared to others as viewed and evaluated by your colleagues, immediate supervisors, subordinates, customers, or family. This is a primary factor that would make you most successful in future. You should therefore be clear in your mind what values and attributes you possess so that you could provide others with *exceptional experiences* when relating to them and the extent that they can rely on your good faith, economising, innovativeness, firmness in purpose and orderliness to mention but a few qualities that would differentiate you and build a strong character. A unique value proposition and tone of temper would be key in ensuring that you stay relevant and high in demand. It is these value propositions and character traits that would empower you with the capacities to *provide a level of enthusiasm* that get people excited to be associated with you. It is these cutting-edge character traits that would instil in others the belief that *their lives will be substantially improved* by their association with you, that you would make their lives easier, and that through their association with you, feel part of a group or 'tribe' that is professional, stylish, thriving and most proficient and prolific.

Essentially what we suggest is that in a changing world, you have to be smart with a cutting-edge character that *solidifies an emotional connection* with people in your circle of influence and you should mindfully nurture this connection. People in your circle of influence will most likely continue to relate, converse and partner with you, or more practically speaking, purchasing goods or services from you or employ you or offer you a contract, if there is a unique emotional connection and if you *make them*

feel good. It is this connection that gives others the confidence to build mutual association and make them your loyal supporters. To *build an affinity towards* you, you must be able to put the others at the heart of everything you do. This is a huge challenge in building a differentiated image and character because underlying all of this is trust, sameness and loyalty that others ought to experience when relating to you.

You will only be successful if others come to recognise that *you consistently meet their expectations* more than anybody else, as nobody wants to risk being disappointed. Building trust requires communication, sincerity and commitment to uphold promises and agreed-upon terms and conditions. These are cutting-edge character traits that build a sense of community around you; tie all the other traits together and build loyalty as *others have to consider what they would give up if they break ties with you*.

But this is not enough. This is only the foundation upon which you could build a differentiated experience for others. To be really differentiated and iconic, you have to strengthen the emotional connections by *being forward thinking and create a vision for the future*. You have to position yourself as someone different, who thinks differently and is consistently planning and working towards the 'next big thing'. Always finding new ways to innovate and surprise those in your circle of influence. This is vital to your continued prosperity because to be successful at a given time does not ensure that you will remain an influencer or trendsetter forever. In order for you *to gain a competitive reputation,* you have to provide enough evidence that your name guarantees a certain quality of experience which means that you should evolve and continuously improve. People would then grow accustomed to *constantly awaiting with a keen expectation for the next thing* or insight you may come up with. This way you not only *reinvent yourself time and time again* but also help others to reinvent themselves and to stay relevant.

You may ask where is this line of reasoning leading to? Essentially what we are advocating is that in order to navigate a changing world, you need to be different and are differentiated from others so that you can remain relevant and in high demand. What we are advocating is that you have to develop a mindset and cutting-edge character with very specific and observable traits as a well-crafted 'brand identity' unique to yourself. In a sense, the changing conditions provide you with the opportunity to craft either a new brand or making relevant changes to your existing character traits. The aim being to differentiate what you can offer and what is unique to your offering. Secondly, to develop a brand narrative that would make it easier to persuade others of your unique qualities and relevance. Thirdly, to convey a brand message or character traits that could vividly create an emotional connectivity, loyalty and commitment and establish a support structure or a 'tribe'. A tribe that believes that they stand to gain a lot from their association with you. A tribe that you can rely on for support and even protection if calamities stop at your doorstep. Your 'brand' in this way is a valuable intangible asset but also serves as a symbol that enables others to identify and separate you from others and simplifies what makes you unique and what they can expect from you. Your brand then becomes essentially your promise as to the kind of person you are; what other people may come to expect from you; what they stand to benefit from the association' and what they could experience if they become keen supporters. 'Brand' in this way is essentially your set of character traits that over time will be recognisable in society in general and more pertinently in your circle of influence.

So, you need to sit down and answer a few basic questions. *Firstly,* what is your sweet spot. What traits and values do you uphold as a person. If you do not build your values and beliefs, you will come across as unauthentic, not solid and trustworthy and your good faith will ultimately become questionable, and you will fail. A branding effort needs to start with deciphering those traits and values that are true to yourself and that you will

hold onto. Here you could consider simple adjectives to describe your traits and values. For instance, are you:

- adjustable
- captivating
- ambitious
- boundless
- calm
- cheerful
- tolerant
- exciting
- economical
- hard-working
- knowledgeable
- ethical
- honest and sincere.

We suggest you read Chiaravalle and Schenck (2014) that sets out approximately 50 adjectives that may contextualise your character. *Secondly*, to create an emotional connection with others, you ought to be clear as to what do you want others to feel and perceive about your brand. What are the words and phrases that should come up in the minds of others when they think and discuss you as a person. *Thirdly*, what should be the voice and tone of your character that astutely conveys the features and benefits of your brand and its offering.

All in all, your brand will establish what you stand for; what people can expect from you and how you will respond to the changing world that is unfolding. Your 'brand' ought to be permanently on your mind if you wish to secure long-term prosperity in a changing world. *Therefore, character matters!*

With this in mind, what can you expect from the chapters ahead? The overarching theme of this book is how to build a smart *brand* so that you can remain relevant and continue to prosper in a changing world. Here, the focus is on the core competencies, habits and virtues that you can leverage to build the best possible 'brand' or 'character' or 'tone of temper' that

the economy will continue to reward. Why do we place the emphasis on character rather than technical proficiencies or personality types? The reason is that according to the recruiters, the biggest skills gap or skills required for the future are the following (see Drucker 2020:6):

- critical thinking: 35%
- interpersonal skills: 26%
- leadership skills: 19%
- technical skills: 15%
- digital capabilities: 4%.

This is suggestive of two things. *Firstly,* that 80% of the skills needed in future, require very specific character traits or tone of temper that are founded on well-defined values and principles and ethical conduct that support (1) critical, a-dogmatic thinking, (2) building interpersonal relations in a highly diversified society and (3) servant leadership through innovation, orderliness, firmness in purpose, loyalty and many other character traits. *Secondly,* it is suggestive that 'reskilling' is a major concern and priority because the focus in the past has been on technical proficiencies. This is supported by facts. Eighty per cent of business executives, with that number likely to rise, consider *reskilling* as the key to a pro-growth mindset and character in a changing world (Bughin & Woetzel 2019:3). *This then has inspired us to write this book. To make a contribution to the process of reskilling and more specifically to help you build a smart brand for the future that would secure your long-term prosperity*. Having set out the overall purpose or why the authors invested their time and mental energy in writing this book, we must be upfront as to the *angle of approach* that we have followed in the chapters to come.

Most scientific endeavours, like most other enterprises, follow a certain predetermined pattern of thought or line of deductive reasoning and a particular narrative or style of writing or doing, whether formal, informal, playful or academic.

So, let us pause for a moment and reflect on the particular aspects of our *angle of approach,* incorporating elements of the

applied paradigm, the intentional scholarly method employed and how the text is organised to offer a comprehensive and consistent answer to the principal question or hypothesis underlying the text.

Let's reflect on the overall paradigm or pattern of thought. Here we have to be brief and would only reflect on five salient elements.

Firstly, the authors' line of thought is not consistent with the lopsided arguments by any one of the dominant theories and notions that consider reality either as a permanent conflict or a random process of events or an unalterable structure of social entities and roles.

The paradigm followed instead resonates what the Greek philosopher Aristotle argued in favour of, and that is the notion that there is order in the universe that people could understand and use to live virtuous and well-designed lives and continue to prosper and thrive.

There is order and an intrinsic end to all events because, as Albert Einstein articulated it, God does not play dice with the universe. In more recent history, people responsible for great medical breakthroughs – men and women such as Louis Pasteur, Marie Curie, Jonas Salk and Paul Ehrlich – never second-guessed for one moment that there are solutions to the medical challenges that they had to face and desired to resolve.

Their faith in *universal order and benevolence* made them believe that there were cures for these diseases and that it was their responsibility and their destiny to discover them. We as authors therefore do not see the transformations that are occurring as fragmented, deconstructed and so unorganised and disorderly – that they are impossible to encompass and actually beyond human cognition. We the authors see the unfolding reality as an ordered process with meaning and finality that we as humans will discover so that we could continue to prosper and thrive. In moral terms, the increased moral sense of human beings

is defined as natural law that enables humans to act morally in their pursuit of happiness and their struggle against evil.

This brings us to the *second* element of our line of reasoning. The second element of our adopted paradigm is that God wants you to prosper and thrive in every possible way. As Zane Pilzer so beautifully articulates it in his book 'God wants you to be rich' (Pilzer 1995). Pilzer is of the view that God wants each of us to be rich in every possible way – health, love and peace of mind as well as material possessions in order to be comfortable and to meet our responsibilities and uphold our dignity. God wants this not just for your own sake, but also to be prosperous in ways that would enable you to work towards the prosperity of others. In simple vernacular, 'God – the author of Nature' as Adam Smith (1982:235) would say, wants you to prosper and thrive or simply put, to be rich in its broadest sense of the word (Pilzer 1995:13). Prosperity is much more than mere economic affluence.

Thirdly, the underlying paradigm of the text to follow, upholds the line of thought that prosperity in its broadest context, is virtuous and ethically desirable. In fact, we would argue that all economic activity has no other end and aim than the Glory of God and the prosperity of mankind. And then, particularly the refreshment of the soul and the advancement of the human spirit and mind. Where this is not the aim, there is no real prosperity, but only devilish and selfish economic hum-hum that does not smooth the human spirit, but rather defile humanity and miss the quest for life.

This brings us to the *fourth* element. In the great scheme of things, individual persons are active agents in the process with real transformative power. This would require of you to become an active participant in change and transformation and the quest for prosperity.

The *fifth* element of the applied paradigm is that there is, underlying the order in the universe, very specific virtues that if properly mastered, would result in greater prosperity and wealth.

Given the order and universal benevolence of creation, we as humans must master very specific habits and virtues in addition to some very time-related technical proficiencies in order to continue to prosper and thrive.

These virtues, as will be more expounded upon in Chapter 6, can be universally applied and are not confined to any particular economic theory or model, being it neo-liberal capitalism, socialism or market socialism. So, the paradigm as articulated aforesaid is a world view that is founded upon solid grounds underlying the very core of human essence and existence.

As authors we are very mindful that the paradigm is indeed very contentious, something we respect. Some might even argue that the kind of reasoning that is displayed in the text is indeed positivism of the worst kind. However, we are of the view and we will prove it in Chapter 6 that metaphysical aspects or theism cannot be discarded from any discussion on prosperity otherwise the system of thought is not intelligible. See Walters (2018: 264–303) for a more detailed exposé on the ethical and moral deficiencies in the current economic discourse.

Given the aforesaid pattern of thought, the authors follow an *intentional scholarly method* in the text. Apart from dividing the text into three parts, more about that later, the text is more than a presentation of academic research outcome, but rather an *interpretation* of what is a massively complex universal enterprise.

We do not want to bore you, the reader, with research methodological concepts such as hypothesis, hermeneutic awareness of qualitative literature study or theoretical construction of knowledge. Nor do we want to confuse you the reader, with monographs of academic arguments to defend any particular economic system, nor the wide range of ethical theories. Neither is the text about the so-called economic ethics or an ethical analysis about the functioning of the markets and the moral and ethical implications of capital and markets. Therefore, do not expect theoretical arguments or insight of the new economy of the 21st century or the ethical dilemmas of

contemporary neo-liberal economics or the complexity of virtue ethics and notions of virtue in social systems.

Neither is the text about identity, community values or behavioural economics – fields that are well covered by scholars such as Alasclair McIntyre, and recent work of Daniel Markovits and Hartmuth Rosa. Therefore, the text is not embedded in economics, but rather in the human persons' in-created sense of morality that could lead to prosperity and wealth in its broadest sense that encompass material, emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions of human nature.

In this broader sense, prosperity is not a mere economic enterprise, nor purely an economic outcome but incorporates many other dimensions of the human essence. In this sense, the text may be considered as a *hybrid* both formally and materially. It is not singularly economics, business ethics, organisational behaviour, motivational psychology, or philosophical ethics.

Because of the aforesaid, we have incorporated the term 'Prosperity Ethics*'* in the title of the book to resonate the hybrid nature of human prosperity. 'Prosperity Ethics*'* as employed in the title, is a master narrative that resonates the search for knowledge in how best the economic household should acquire, allocate, distribute and consume goods and services, in a fair, equitable and morally justifiable way as an integral part of the human quest to be prosperous and to thrive. The text gives an exposé of a very small, but fundamental part of this human quest, namely the best possible character traits that a person ought to master in order to be prosperous and thriving — not merely only for your personal sake but to bring about universal prosperity and happiness. The reader is therefore urged to view the text as part of an open-ended series on 'Prosperity Ethics*'.* The text, as an integral part of the overall master narrative, intends to incite, inspire and empower the reader with further knowledge on the broader subject of ethical conduct and then most specifically the ethical character traits required to continue to prosper and thrive in a changing world.

This does not mean that the authors are oblivious about the cost of unfettered consumption of the modern-day drive for growth by the neo-liberal society. On the contrary, the authors would argue that the 'Prosperity Virtues', together with the seven habits and technical proficiencies expounded in the text, provide an ethical paradigm that would result in more discernible economic growth and the quest for prosperity will be balanced and internalised through greater synergy with other ethical considerations, such as sustainability, human dignity, loyalty and orderliness, to mention but a few. We believe it will make the careful reader better equipped to respond to the transformative years ahead in a much more ethical way.

Let's now reflect on the chosen narrative. The focus in the text is on lived knowledge that resembles post-modernism with its underlying relativism rather than positivism with value-free economics. Given the aforesaid and because the text has also a classical glaze, the authors deliberately decided to employ a narrative that makes the overly complex dilemma of universal prosperity and codes of conduct for prosperity more digestible. This is achieved by deliberately following a particular narrative.

Firstly, it is a deliberate attempt by the authors to write in a fluent, easy to follow and understood narrative. Some may even say that the text reads like a popular soft cover that one buys at the airport before a flight. Yet, the careful reader would discover that a scientific base underlies the line of thought and reasoning.

The authors' deliberate intent is to make the lived knowledge equally accessible to the pastor, the attorney and the mechanic. The text therefore avoids as much as possible philosophical and highly academic vernacular that would be merely accessible to a small group of experts. For those who consider highly loaded narratives or a formal style of writing as the correct genre for academic or scholarly works, this style of writing may be foreign and may not be appealing and not carry their approval.

However, the text is not a *playbook* based on popular opportunistic arguments on how to become instantly rich nor a

book on economic theories on how to achieve economic success. Instead, we believe the text is more in line with an 'applied book' where theoretical background precedes the list of competencies, habits and virtues depending on the chapter.

In achieving the aforesaid, the text avoids present-day crisis narration as well as open questions and gloomy predictions. After each theoretical and real-life assessments, we cut to the core in identifying the technical competencies, habits and virtues that we through deductive reasoning identify as those competencies, habits and virtues that the market will continue to reward in the changing world as it is unfolding.

This brings us to the last aspect, namely how the text is organised. The overall style is to lead the reader from the more general context to practical application. In order to follow a consistent line of thought, the text is organised in three parts, namely *transformation, habits and virtues.*

The text starts off with rudimentary observations of the rapid changes occurring in the world today. The first part offers a brief but convincing description of three mega trends in the contemporary world. For the contextualisation of the transformational megatrends, the authors employ the concept of 'Fourth Stages' in referring to the following terms: Industrial Revolution, Awakening and Generation. This analysis is suggestive that we live in 'the Fourth Industrial Revolution', 'the Fourth Awakening' and the upcoming of the fourth distinguished generation 'The Fourth Generation – The Millennials'.

This is followed by a brief theoretical exposé and practical outline of the 14 most crucial habits and virtues that high performance, or in more contemporary vernacular 'Smart', individuals seeking success and wealth in the transformative world unfolding, ought to master.

In the text, *habits* are argued as the necessary response to the changing and fluid reality or the internalisation of certain principles that shape the structure of everyday human action.

As *habits* need solid ground unless it is merely a trained behaviour following various and often contradicting ideological, cultural or ethical patterns, virtues come into play.

Thus, in the third part of the text, we offer what one might see as a 'Prosperity Matrix' that relies on the solid ground of *virtues* that have an ultimate meaning and telic end. In this part, we have endeavoured to offer a theoretical analysis as well as a practical layout of what we term 'Prosperity Virtues'. 'Prosperity Virtues' in our humble assessment, offers a bright picture of our worldly reality that is intended to be the way of the human journey to prosperity in its most profound meaning. We trust that you would view part three as a credible engagement with the overly complex theoretical and universal context of *virtues*. We have made a concerted effort to express the relevancy of the *ethics of virtues* in today's language and today's cognition. In so doing, we hope we have given justice to the ageless validity of *virtues* as a reliable order in *Universal Prosperity.*

Having laid out the philosophical 'Angle of Approach', let's now conclude by a more practical layout of the text to come to a concise answer to the principal question and the underlying purpose of this book. This we attempted to achieve by firstly analysing three major trends that we believe will have major implications for the value aspects of human existence and then more specifically would demand vastly different traits or qualities of character. The three trends are of a technological, attitudinal and generational nature. *Firstly,* we analysed *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* (ch. 2) that would change the economic structure; the nature of economic opportunities; and how you can advance your proficiency and efficiency through advanced technologies. We have analysed the profound and systematic changes caused by the *Fourth Industrial Revolution.* Following on to that, we have explicated the impact upon the supply side of the economy. What then followed is an analysis of the core competencies required and that we believe will be in high demand in order to be responsive to the *Fourth Industrial Revolution* as it unfolds in the years to come.

Secondly, we have analysed *The Fourth Awakening* (ch. 3) or the move away from material things to a new phase of de-materialisation and the quest for self-realisation. In this analysis, we have indicated the shift in the attitudinal pattern of human behaviour to more leisure-related work and experiences because of the increase in the discretionary income. Coupled to this shift in attitude and behaviour comes a reaffirmation of the ethic of equality of opportunities and the quest for self-realisation. The process led to an awakening from materialism. In the exposé, we explicated 15 unique character traits that will be in high demand because these traits are most unequally distributed. These immaterial assets or unique traits we argue ought to be mastered to make the most of *the Fourth Awakening* and the attitudinal shift to de-materialisation and self-realisation.

Finally, we have expounded *The Fourth Generation* (ch. 4) or the Millennials, as the largest cohort that will set the *decorum* and *Rules of Engagement* from now until 2045. From this analysis, we will identify core competencies that will be central to the changing conditions. In the chapter, we will explain why we believe that the Millennials as a cohort will set mind-shifting trends in society with vast implications for the way we converse, relate and do business. We identify seven core competencies that would greatly assist you to partner with millennials. Some notable competencies that we have expounded are:

- How to build collaborative relationships.
- The importance of adaptability and flexibility.
- Respect for diversity.
- How to promote purpose and meaning.

We will then proceed to identify smart 'habits for a changing world' that would instil the core competencies as habits of conduct. Here the focus is not on simplistic routine habits or behaviour that is how you squeeze your toothpaste, that can be done with little or no conscious thought. The habits we have identified and expounded upon are deliberate habits deduced from the changing conditions and core competencies required

and ought to be consciously and continuously relived and inhabited to become an integral part of your character and increase your odds to be most prosperous. The 10 smart habits we have identified and analysed would change more than your individual attitude, but rather change your character and motives, so that you can make the core competencies your own and place your 'mark' or 'take' on it. Ultimately, as these habits change your character and motives, your personal 'brand' will resonate unique traits and characteristics that are most susceptible to your enduring prosperity. Whereafter we will identify '7 Prosperity Virtues' that we will bear out to bring greater steadiness, reliability, coherency and integration in character, and then your personal *brand*. These smart virtues would allow you to approach the changing world with the required calm proficiency in order to secure your long-term prosperity. The 7 Prosperity Virtues that we have identified and expounded as part of what we call the 'Prosperity Grid' act interactively as a network of behavioural capabilities or character traits that are universal, meaning that these virtues are in potential under all circumstances and at all times. Where habits can differ from time to time and from culture to culture, virtues are character strengths that are applicable irrespective of the time or moral consideration(s) that are determined by culture.

You will see that our focus is not on developing quick-fix techniques or personality traits, but rather to identify and expound qualities of character that are deeply rooted in a system of strong values, principles and ethics needed for your future prosperity. We believe that we have 'cracked' the code and figured out which core competencies, habits of behaviour and universal virtues would matter the most and be rewarded the most in the changing world ahead. From the identified core competencies, habits and virtues, you should be able to formulate a smart brand with your unique personal *brand vision* and *voice*. By the end of this book, you will no longer wonder about the key differentiating factors involved in building a proficient brand that would ensure your continued relevance and calm proficiency in a

changing world, and to be able to offer to others in future something very useful, novel and worthwhile. You will also feel empowered by the set of operating principles for sustainable prosperity and you will feel a new sense of energy and focus to realign your character or *brand* to navigate the challenges ahead. This will make you smarter and more confident to face the challenges and seize the opportunities and you would experience calmness as well as vigorous growth and wellbeing.

Let us get started!

But before we jump in, we wish to explain in a short allegory, what will now follow, because this may make things simpler. John a keen athlete, after his college years, gave up all sports and exercising because of the hectic work–life pressure as a new rising star at his organisation. John then decided that it is time to change his attitude and wish to reinvent himself to become more energetic, athletic in posture and broaden his experience by travelling the world. John one day stumbled over an Internet article about a 60-year-old man who has completed the Abbott World Marathon Majors in three years and whose name now appears on the 'Wall of Fame' and holds the coveted Six Star medal that only 3590 marathoners over the world have achieved. John on further enquiry came to realise that this is no ordinary feat as a standard marathon has to be completed in (1) New York, (2) London, (3) Boston, (4) Tokyo, (5) Chicago and (6) Berlin. John then decided to make this his new challenge. John joined a running club and got his own coach to facilitate and speed up the training process. After John shared with the coach his dream, the coach said to John that he will have to, apart from building miles, develop very unique and character qualities because the challenge ahead is no ordinary 'run in the park' and would require (1) self-discipline, (2) firmness in purpose, (3) resilience, (4) lots of gratefulness and (5) hard work. The coach advised John that in order to appreciate the qualities that he has to master over time, he should first make a study of the unique challenges of the Abbott World Marathon Majors. The coach said to John to study

the Abbott World Marathon Majors and to develop sufficient knowledge of the different courses such as:

- changing weather conditions
- elevation differences
- time differences
- travelling times and stopovers
- qualification times for each marathon
- cultural precepts of the hosting nations and how to deal with medical emergencies in a foreign country.

Then the coach said, once you have done the analysis you and I could sit down and work out a training regime; see what skillsets will be in demand; and what unique traits and character qualities you should master to be on top of your game plan and succeed in your endeavour. This then is the purpose of the first three chapters to follow. We will analyse three megatrends that will impact upon the skillsets that you would require and the qualities of character that you cannot ignore in the changing world in order to be successful, prosper and thrive. Whereafter, we will introduce very specific habits of behaviour to help you to make a smooth transition during uncertain times ahead and finally offer a set of seven virtues that would be very necessary to develop an abundant mindset and a pro-growth character in order for you to be successful, prosper and thrive in your endeavours ahead.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution

■ The Roaring Twenties

Travel with us back to the 1920s, a time during which the First World War was followed by the rise in consumerism and the emergence of a vibrant new world economy. This era is fondly remembered as the 'Roaring Twenties' (1920s). The Roaring Twenties era that prevailed nearly 100 years ago was defined by a surge in production and consumption of many new products. This was the era for the emergence of the concept of what is now labelled as consumer sovereignty, or more playfully, the concept that the 'Customer is King' which has been the driver of a brightly revitalised world economy. It was indeed a time of prolific invention. The advent of the telephone, instant camera and the development of the radio not only revitalised the human spirit at the time but most importantly led to economic growth and prosperity not experienced previously.

The Roaring Twenties and then most pertinently the era of the late 19th and early-20th century have had a profound influence on the worldview and human expression at the time which shaped the way the generation lived, related to one another and expressed themselves. The scale and speed of change as it occurred in the late 19th and the early-20th century are often underestimated. Wave upon wave of scientific advances have transformed many aspects of daily and working lives (Artley 2018:1).

This period is considered by Robert Fogel (2000) as the Third Awakening and was intellectually and spiritually dominated by the Gospel of Efficiency and the Keynesian demand-side economics. The Gospel of Efficiency advanced at the time the belief that economic prosperity will revitalise the human spirit and eliminate poverty and inequality. The Keynesian demand-side economic discourse advanced the notion that continued increased consumption would lead to economic growth. These two discourses have perhaps been the most influential force in the material prosperity of the Roaring Twenties and the exponential growth in technological advances at the time.

Today, the world awaits the Roaring Twenty-Twenties (2020s) with eager anticipation and much more excitement as a decade likely to be defined, similar to the Roaring Twenties, by further leaps in technological innovation and a change in the way humans live, relate and work in the 21st century. As has been the case during the Roaring Twenties, what is lying ahead may also be characterised by socially influenced political and economic disruptions and upheavals that would not only change how humans live but perhaps, most fundamentally who we are as human beings. Whichever way, we now await a period that is a re-emergence of the Roaring Twenties, a period starting now and that is already characterised by a few themes that have and will continue to have a profound effect on humanity. Indeed, a period as will become clearer in the next section ('Profound and systematic change') that will bring profound and systematic changes and that will demand new skillsets and different

character traits to build a transformational character to deal with the complexity and uncertainties that come with the unfolding trend.

Let us reflect on some of these themes that characterise the technological advancement that is already driving the new revolution. New trends in technology innovation range from specialist uses such as smart and connected machines and systems, nanotechnology and quantum computing, robotics, drones and 3D-printing, to medical applications of technology such as gene sequencing and other biological breakthroughs. Innovations centred on ethical consumption include renewable energy, driver-less cars and new forms of money such as Bitcoin. But let us not forget the development of the so-called sharing-based industry such as Airbnb and Uber, the gig economies and the emergence of the new pirates of the new world economy – the cyber warlords that constitute another fast-evolving trend. The new trends build in part on the digital technologies made widely available by the Third Industrial Revolution of the Roaring Twenties. As a result, the unfolding new trends depend on the inosculation of digital, biological and physical innovations that are fast changing the way humans create, exchange and distribute value (Von Reiche 2019:1). Many of these themes and trends centre on the unparalleled development in digital information that now forms the foundation of the manufacturing, marketing, trade, distribution and consumption of goods and services (Department of Telecommunications & Postal Services 2018:16).

These themes are evolving today and will continue to do so in the future. We are bound to experience further breakthroughs in waves. The Roaring 2020s will be known for a fusion of technologies and new interactions between the physical, digital and biological domains. This is fundamentally different from previous revolutions. In this revolution, new technologies and broad-based innovations are spreading much faster and further than a century ago (Schwab 2016:8). So far, the main benefits have befallen consumers on the demand side of the economy. The next phase is predicted to mainly benefit the supply side

with unprecedented structural and systemic improvements to make production, marketing and distribution more efficient. This will reach new dimensions as new concepts and technologies are being introduced (Department of Telecommunications & Postal Services 2018:11). This is likely to inspire economic growth, which will mean a rapid price deflation as the cost of global trade drops. Take for instance, the drop in book prices as seen in the case of kindle and the sharp drop in the price of music on the Internet which makes this fact quite evident.

As the various technological themes evolve and converge, economic growth, at least in certain sectors of the economy, will exponentially increase. McKinsey Global Institute (2017), for example, predicts that digital work could contribute $2.7 trillion to the global gross domestic product by 2025, making technological innovation even more appealing. Another example is the growth in the global 'app economy', which in 2015 surpassed the $100 billion mark in revenue, overtaking the century-old film industry (Schwab 2016:36).

This unfolding revolution has the potential to propel unprecedented economic prosperity. With a vision of global prosperity coupled with a futuristic conviction and forecast of exponential economic growth and job creation, this revolution and the technological themes present and still to come, are therefore a major trend (Gillwald 2019) and hold great potential. However, as in the case of the Roaring Twenties, it is inevitable that the Roaring 2020s will affect change in desirable and undesirable ways (Department of Telecommunications & Postal Services 2018:10). Most economies are struggling to make sense of the changes and to find effective responses to mitigate the threats and capitalise on the opportunities. Whichever way we look at the unfolding trends, it is likely that the next century will be filled by social, political and economic upheavals (Von Reiche 2019:1).

One thing is clear, the world is on the verge of, if not already, experiencing an economic revolution driven by technological advances, that will impact every aspect of human existence.

What is now unfolding is changing how we communicate, consume, produce, distribute and entertain. But ultimately, the revolution will change humanity, our values, behaviours, attitudes and how we fulfil our potential. In short, like the Roaring Twenties, this revolution will bring a great shift in how we live and work together and relate to each other (Department of Telecommunications & Postal Services 2018:10).

As humans change so does the world around them. The world 50 to 100 years from now will also be different and will owe a lot of its character to the choices we make today, the human attitude we express, and the values and virtues we treasure and master now and in the future. We saw during the Roaring Twenties that the human discourse and human character as shaped and formed by the Gospel of Efficiency and the Keynesian demand-side economics coupled with the technological revolution at the time, have significantly influenced the outcome of the Third Industrial Revolution. The mass culture of consumerism, together with the technological advances, not only propelled economic growth but brought humanity very close to collapse because of the (Parliament 1999:8):

- inexorable demand for our limited natural resources
- increasing division between rich and poor
- aggravated injustice
- disintegration of communities
- spiritual indirection.

Therefore, just like in the previous revolutions, how the unfolding revolution will transform humanity, human institutions and human morality for the good and the bad will depend on the choices that humans make now, the habits we acquire and the character traits we master.

What perhaps makes this revolution different from the earlier ones is the fact that the new technologies and broad-based innovations are dispersing and blurring the lines of civilisations as the world of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, unlike in the Roaring Twenties, is becoming a global village (Parliament 1999:3).

Therefore, unique to the unfolding trend is the possibility of a renewed level for collaboration and creative engagement between all peoples from diverse civilisations which would influence the character and course of human society. This may give new context and meaning to several ancient understandings of humanity. Humans must together make the decision to work interdependently to take the responsibility of caring for the earth; to see each human life as deserving of meaning; to live in a community so that we can create peace and dignity and to live peacefully, sustainably and ethically.

How this will unfold is not clear. What we do know is that the world of the Roaring 2020s is moving forward and profound changes are lying ahead. Waves upon waves of changes are filling us with both hope and ambiguity. The trends unfolding are but the start of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. To continue to thrive and prosper under the changing conditions will greatly depend on our human attitude and the character traits we possess. Similar to The Roaring Twenties, there are very specific character traits and attitudes required which are very specific to the time. These specific and unique character traits will greatly influence inter alia our continued employability; how we manage the changing conditions and how we develop and maintain a competitive advantage.

For now, let us focus on a few of the most noticeable examples of the profound and systematic changes that are occurring and that are lying ahead. This would bring us closer to understand what our attitude and character traits ought to be to build a transformational character that could effectively respond to the velocity, complexity, promises and perils of the unfolding revolution. This chapter will then be concluded by identifying those competencies or the skillset needed to build a transformational character in order to respond effectively to the changing conditions in continuing to prosper and thrive. It is our averment that the competencies as conceptualised would ensure that we extract what is best within each of us and extract the most from what is unfolding. By doing so, we could continue to thrive and prosper as the Roaring 2020s is unfolding.

■ Profound and systematic change

What is the Fourth Industrial Revolution and what are the systematic changes that are being brought about by the unfolding trend? In this section, we will briefly contextualise a few of the systematic changes of the unfolding trend. This is expounded with the purpose in assisting us to outline the core competencies determined by the stated conditions of the unfolding trends and to identify those character traits or qualities of mind and character that ought to be self-mastered to reinvent, innovate, build a better you and to thrive and prosper under the changing conditions.

Let's start at the beginning. Klaus Schwab, the founder and executive chairperson of the World Economic Forum, coined the term 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' (4IR). The term describes a trend, indeed a global trend, that is characterised by blurring boundaries between the physical, technological, biological and ethical worlds. It is the outcome of a mingling of advances in 'artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, the Internet of things (IoT), 3D-printing, genetic engineering, quantum computing and other technologies that give rise to the shared, gig and open economies' (Defigueiredo 2019:1). Generally speaking, the Fourth Industrial Revolution as a global trend is a collective force behind products and services that are evolving in the global economy and that are fast becoming an integral and indispensable part of modern life (Defigueiredo 2019:1). Think for instance of global positioning system (GPS) which guides you to your destination by providing the fastest route; Apple's voice-activated virtual assistant called Siri; personalised Netflix recommendations; Facebook's ability to recognise your face and tag you in a friend's photo; shared services such as Uber and Airbnb (Defigueiredo 2019:1). Another trend is the seamless way individuals now move from digital domains to offline reality using connected technology that manages people's lives (Miller 2016:3).

Because the term is still evolving, different people understand the term 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' in different ways. Opinions

range from excited to cautious. Some are fearful that robots or other forms of technology will take over most human activities, creating unemployment and automation. Then there are those who do not think the description of 'revolution' is warranted at all, that these trends are predictable improvements and fusions of existing technologies, bringing increased productivity, better distribution or more connectivity, but nothing as extreme as a revolution. Mainly like the past, but just a bit bigger and faster (The Conversation 2018:1).

However, what remains undisputed is that the unfolding trend is the consequence of a perfect storm of technologies that is paving the way for a transformation that is happening at an unprecedented whirlwind pace (Defigueiredo 2019:1) and bringing about seismic shifts in how we relate as we work and live (Marr 2019:1).

However, it is conceded that the 4IR follows on the three previous industrial revolutions. The first that was characterised by the engineering development associated with steam that occurred around the 1700s. In this revolution, water and steam have powered mechanical manufacturing facilities (Department of Telecommunications & Postal Services 2018:12). The Second Industrial Revolution led to electricity and other scientific advances that powered the manufacturing assembly line and mass production. This occurred in the 1800s and lasted until the 1950s (Defigueiredo 2019:2). The 1950s brought with it the Third Industrial Revolution and innovations such as the first computers and the digital technology that developed from that. This revolution is characterised by the development of electronics, telephones, plane to line switching (PLSs), network computer (NC) machines, personal computers (PCs), computer-aided manufacturing (CAM), computer integrated manufacturing (CIM), spreadsheets and lean manufacturing (Department of Telecommunication & Postal Services 2018:12). These innovations and technological advances lead to the automation of processes involved in manufacturing and significant disruption in industries such as banking, energy and communications (Defigueiredo 2019:2).

The first revolution transformed the economy from one founded on farming and workmanship to one founded on industry and the use of machines for production. People's lives changed as the economy changed. The advent of widely available electricity and the discovery of the uses of oil further aided mass production during the second revolution. The third revolution brought with it information technology, which further automated production (Xu, David & Hi Kim 2018:90).

Although each revolution can be viewed and to some extent understood separately, viewing them together highlights how each revolution built on the innovations of the previous to arrive at better forms of production and procurement (Xu et al. 2018:90).

What is prevalent in each revolution, is disruption and radical change. Each of these revolutions dotting our history introduced radical changes to the world economy and people's social lives because of new technologies and novel ways of viewing reality (Schwab 2016:6). The unfolding trends, characterised by their disruptive force, are no exception.

But why are the unfolding trends that are building upon the previous revolutions being considered as the Fourth Industrial Revolution? Schwab (2016:3) offers three reasons that underpin his convictions that a fourth marked revolution is upon us. The three reasons can be summarised as follows.

◼ Velocity

According to Schwab (2016:3), the current trend sharply differs from the previous industrial revolutions in that changes are occurring exponentially rather than linearly. One of the reasons for this is that the world has become complex and interconnected. Also, because new technologies beget newer and even more capable technologies. The speed of the current breakthrough according to Schwab has no historical precedent.

■ Breadth and depth

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, according to Schwab (2016:3), builds on the digital revolution and is resulting in radical paradigm shifts by combining multiple technologies, affecting individuals, societies, businesses and economies. It is changing who we are fundamentally, instead of just what we do and how we do it.

■ System impact

The present unfolding revolution requires a complete overhaul of whole systems nationally and internationally. The revolution not only disrupts almost every industry, economy and society in every country, but according to Schwab (2016:3), 'the breadth and depth of these changes herald the transformation of entire systems of production; management and governance'. Schwab (2016:28) argues that the velocity, reach and system impact of the current revolution is heralding phenomenal economic, social and cultural changes we cannot gauge at this point. Nor can we fully comprehend as yet, how the many disruptions and discoveries will be harmonised and integrated, though the current trend of harmonising and integration make the Fourth Industrial Revolution already in many ways unique and distinctly different.

Whichever way we look at the unfolding trend, the revolution has become a known reality. The reality as we begin to experience it continuously challenges our existing ideas of life and work (Bizcon 2019:1). Likewise, the trend is also challenging our competencies, character traits and behaviours, attitudes and values. This is most prevalent in the profound and systemic changes that are already a lived reality and that are still to come. Let us reflect on some of these profound and systemic changes both real and perceived. We can do that by firstly acknowledging that there are indeed similarities between the four industrial revolutions (Xu et al. 2018:91). We may be able to infer the scope and content of the unfolding trend that are for now quite uncertain and ambiguous, by reflecting upon the similarities of past revolutions. By implication, because history repeats itself, the

uncertain nature of the new unfolding trends may be better clarified by reflecting upon the nature of past revolutions.

Xu et al. (2018:91) identified the following broad similarities. Firstly, during each revolution, productivity increased by 50 times from what it was in the preceding revolution. Consider for instance the increase in productivity of the Second Industrial Revolution that is now known as the industrial age over the agricultural age or the First Revolution. A second similarity is that each subsequent revolution and associated age have destroyed many of the job opportunities available during the preceding age. For example, the Third Revolution or the so-called Information Age has replaced the jobs opportunities created by the Second Revolution or the Industrial Age. According to Xu et al. (2018:91), the losses in job opportunities in our industrial age have more to do with changes in the job market and in the knowledge workers need than with government policy and free trade agreements. Today knowledge workers produce most goods and services. This trend will continue in the unfolding Fourth Industrial Revolution as we will continue to see a growing gap in the number of job opportunities available to highly skilled workers versus semi-skilled workers.

As has been the case during previous revolutions, in the coming decades, the technological advances that drive the Fourth Industrial Revolution will result in a complete restructuring of the world economy, the job market and the way we do things (Schwab 2016:viii). We already experience changes in the value chain, markets in general, life expectancy, and the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment, to mention but a few eminent events impacting on human productivity, the skillsets in demand and the focus on higher knowledge workers. As Schwab asserts, the profound and systematic changes are 'unlike anything humankind has experienced before' (Schwab 2016:1). For example, consider the potential contained in having billions of people connected by mobile devices; the unprecedented rise in processing power; data storage capabilities and knowledge access via the worldwide web (Schwab 2016:1). Another example

may be the technological innovations and associated unfolding shared, gig and open economies that are evolving and are revolutionising the global value chain; how people perform job assignments and how people use assets that have been previously very unproductive, such as an extra bedroom in your house or using your vehicle to be an Uber driver. Similar to the revolutions that preceded, the unfolding trends have the potential to raise global income levels; raise productivity and improve the quality of life of the people around the world.

To date, those able to afford and with access to the digital world have benefitted the most from the unfolding trends (Schwab 2016:3). Digital platforms are making it possible to access services and products that increase the efficiency and convenience of our personal lives. For instance, ordering a cab, booking a flight, buying goods and services through the Internet, making Internet payments, listening to music, watching a movie or playing a game. Any of these can now be done remotely in the comfort of your home, office or car (Schwab 2016:3).

In the future, the technological innovation will also impact upon the supply side of the economy in a very profound and systemic way. These systemic changes, as expected, may bring about a supply chain revolution with better efficiency and more productivity in the long run. Transportation and communication will gradually cost less, as will logistic and global supply chains. This will lower the cost of trade, opening up new markets and bringing economic prosperity (Schwab 2016:3). Take for instance Netflix, which is competing with traditional high-cost cable television. Expensive metered taxis must compete with the less expensive Uber and Lyft. These new companies offer similar products and services to customers in new ways and at reduced fares and greater flexibility. You can watch your favourite movie or show from your home at your leisure or get a ride somewhere as and when needed. This trend continues with overnight accommodation, where new endeavours such as Airbnb is now a competing force with which traditional forms of accommodation have to reckon. Facebook offers media content in competition

with the printed media. Alibaba and Amazon compete with tradition retailers such as bookstores and supermarkets. These are all examples that suggest that the unfolding trends are more than just technological innovations but are creating new markets and new products and services that increase human productivity and efficiency and bolster economic growth. Take for instance the evolution and growth in AI. For example, AI alone could generate between $3tn and $5tn across nearly 20 industries. Another example that perhaps cannot be expressed in monetary value is the impact that blockchain could have in revolutionising humanitarian relief. There are indeed so many more examples to mention (Philbeck, Davis & Larsen 2018:4). But what is evident is that we are indeed witnessing profound and systemic shifts across all sectors of the economy and human life in particular. New business models are influencing the economy, and shifts in production, consumption, transportation and delivery are causing disruption and inviting new competition (Schwab 2016:2). Schwab (2016:2) points out that we are in the midst of a social and political paradigm shift that affects how we work, travel, express ourselves, interact with information and find entertainment. Equally, governments and other institutions of society are being reshaped, and also our system of education, healthcare and transportation amongst many more (Schwab 2016:2). Let us not forget the eminent changes to the environment. This is not all bad, the technology that changes consumer behaviour and the way in which we produce things can help us support, regenerate and preserve the natural environment and the earth's resources by reducing the hidden costs in the form of externalities such as wastage, pollution, overuse and lack of proper integration (Schwab 2016:2).

What therefore is evidently clear is that the extent and pace of change are accelerating and bringing about profound and systemic changes. These and many more profound and systemic changes are indeed a lived reality. We can ignore the unfolding reality or embrace the new trend. The choice is personal. But in our view, we can no longer sit back to see what happens.

We need to get ahead of the curve to benefit from the unfolding trend and to continue to thrive and prosper.

We must rethink how to prepare ourselves to take full advantage of the profound systemic changes and the plethora of opportunities that are becoming available but equally so to be able to respond effectively to the challenges enabled by ever increasing technological changes. We have to prepare ourselves to work and engage in a world alongside machines, AI, the IoT, genetic engineering, quantum computing, robotics and many more other technologies. Of equal importance we have to prepare ourselves to work and live in a highly interconnected world with a lack of privacy and greater transparency but also in a world with diverse cultures, worldview, preferences and opinions.

This is the new reality as it is unfolding. For example, according to research by the World Economic Forum (Omarjee 2018:1), more than half of all workplace tasks will be performed by machines and algorithms as opposed to the current 29%. Likewise, people will also need to reconsider their ethical orientation as digital technologies often put power into the hands of individual persons and the technology will challenge their own ethics that would determine what they do with the power in hand (IBO 2019:2).

What is therefore critical for the time ahead is how we think about technologies brought about by profound and systemic change. This is not simply because technologies are the primary contributors to economic growth and prosperity worldwide and therefore indeed a trendsetter. It is because technologies shape people and people shape technologies. This relationship not only impacts research agendas, investment flow, business models or the content of education systems, but most importantly human character and how we realise our humanness.

A balanced and empowering perspective recognising technologies as capabilities that transform, interpret and create meaning in the world around us, is vital to extract the best that the profound and systemic changes have to offer, and the best

humans have within them. Apart from being simple processes of profound and systemic changes that are distinct from human beings, technological processes are deeply social constructs, culturally situated, and reflective of societal values and ethics (Philbeck et al. 2018:5). Technological processes affect how humans order their lives, interact with one another and how humans see and experience themselves (Philbeck et al. 2018:5). The mutual interaction between technology and humans should therefore not be considered merely from a technical or process perspective. The emphasis on the interaction is key to understand the profoundness and systemic nature of the current trend (Osman 2018:1). What is therefore critical is the importance of the blurring lines between the physical, emotional, digital and technological dimensions of the profound and systemic changes and what that means for social relationships, human attitude and behaviour, and vice versa.

The process of comprehending, analysing and mastering the profound and systemic changes must therefore start with people – with their values, logic, hope, ideals, experiences, empathy and diversity, and many other human dispositions that would impact upon the way humans respond to these profound and systemic changes. Therefore, now the challenge before us, is how to muster the human potential (Watt 2019:91) and to cultivate, through self-mastering human dispositions that could release the true human potential and benefit the most from the profound and systemic changes brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Or as we have alluded to before, to master core competencies and character traits to build a transformational character to deal with the complex and adaptive situations brought about by the profound and systemic changes. These character traits are what we refer to as having a 'Vuma-character' that are responsive to the *velocity* and *uncertainty* in a *meaningful* and *agile* way.

The fact of the matter is that the time to master a 'Vuma-character' is now! The opportunities are significant, and the obligations are ours. The challenges may feel as imposing as the

opportunities are inviting. Yet, we cannot, as Robert J Shiller, Nobel Laurette in economics and Professor of Economics at Yale University (Mdluli & Makhupe 2017) asserts:

> [W]ait until the house burns down to buy fire insurance on it. We cannot wait until there are massive dislocations [and disruptions] in our society to prepare for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. (p. 5)

As Schwab (2016) articulates:

> [T]he changes are so profound that from the perspective of human history, there has never been a time of greater promise or potential peril. The current technological and digital revolution and the profound and systemic change brought about, makes for the overused and often ill-used adage 'this time is different' apt. Simply put, major technological innovations are on the brink of fuelling momentous change. (p. 9)

If we as humans wish to extract the best of what is within us and the best that the profound and systemic changes could offer, we have to prepare ourselves to respond effectively. This would require us to develop and master the most susceptible competencies as navigational tools to thrive and prosper under the unfolding trends. We contextualise these competencies and narrate them under a unique narrative, termed 'Vuma-character'.

■ The Vuma – Character

Neither the technology advancements nor the associated velocity, disruptions and uncertainties that emanate from the unfolding events of the Fourth Industrial Revolution are an exogenous force over which humans have no control. We all individually and collectively have the ability and responsibility to respond with creativity and the necessary agility. To this end, each person has to acquire through continuous learning core competencies like for instance, the ability to solve complex problems, inferential thinking and visualisation. What is also imperative is that each person ought to acquire particular qualities of character that would inform a person in real time how to comprehend the world around the person, how to overcome ambiguities and how to respond to opportunities. By aligning to

particular character traits, a person would be greatly assisted to make ethical decisions and help define a person in relation to a person's own goals, aspirations, fears and passions.

In this sense, character traits are not static and cast in concrete. At any point in time, history requires specific competencies and character traits in order to respond to the demands of the time. This means that the core competencies and character traits to lead and navigate your path to progress in times of change and uncertainty ought to be alive and constantly moving with the times. This time around with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, it is no exception. What is now required, is to self-master specific competencies in order to build a transformational character that can deal with the complex and adaptive situations as they are occurring.

To simplify and narrate the set of specific time-based competencies needed to build a transformational character, we have conceptualised the acronym 'VUMA-CHARACTER'. The word 'Vuma' in isiZulu denotes 'Thrive'; 'Agree'; 'Willingness', that in our playful mind, beautifully and with the necessary elegance, resonates the transformational character needed to extract what is best within us and extract what is best within the unfolding Fourth Industrial Revolution. Indeed, a character that *thrives* in times of change *agrees* to be responsive and responsible and having the 'willingness' to work in a collaborative spirit. This narrative contextualises the duality of the unfolding trend and the response demanded. The narrative denotes the 'Velocity' and 'Uncertainty' of the times and the overarching character traits of 'Meaningfulness' and 'Agility' that summarise the transformational character needed to be responsive to the times. Here we do not try to be scientific and academic. We merely offer a simplified understanding and provide a distinctive structure that is in a special way explanatory and per se a form of explanation, if indeed not self-explanatory.

Having clarified the narrative, let us move on. From our assessment and cognisance of the nature, scope and complexities of the unfolding Fourth Industrial Revolution, as briefly explained,

we have identified seven competencies that we deduced would be high in demand as the Fourth Industrial Revolution unfolds. These seven competencies are now briefly outlined.

■ Competency #1: Continuously searching for meaning and purpose

In times of transformation, the challenge ahead is to execute ground-breaking strategies in a creative and imaginative way in order to gain and retain a competitive advantage, remain relevant, purposeful and do what is meaningful. This requires in the first instance some contextual intelligence, the capacity and inclination to spot emerging trends and to make the correct connections (Schwab 2016:107). To do that, it is imperative to continuously search for a wholistic meaning of the events unfolding by analysing and applying past experiences to new situations, critically questioning the status quo and develop a deep understanding of changing conditions in order to make complex decisions timeously.

It further requires a form of inspired intelligence to continuously nourish the creative human impulse by encouraging a new collective and moral conscience based on a shared sense of meaning, purpose and destiny. 'Inspiration' and 'sharing' are therefore key to discover and pursue what is meaningful and purposeful in the changing environment.

Thirdly, in times of change, it takes a long time before an inclusive future becomes broadly accepted as instrumental to the success of the new unfolding revolution and as such meaningful and purposeful for all. Negative implications and unexpected consequences should therefore be dealt with. To extract what is best in all of us and what is meaningful and purposeful in the unfolding revolution, we ought to develop the mindset of highlighting and addressing rising concerns about inequalities, social tensions, political fragmentation and protection of the environment (Leurent & Shook 2019:9). We ought to develop through self-mastery a mindset of looking to

help the majority of individuals to bring positive changes to their families, organisations and communities by meaningfully and purposefully influencing and guiding the lived environment that surrounds us and that shapes our lives (Leurent & Shook 2019:9). In this way, we will self-master the qualities to continuously looking for purpose and meaning in the unfolding events. Not only for yourself but also for those who are under your influence, by inspiring them with empathy and a meaningful and purposeful vision that connect with their 'hearts' (Leurent & Shook 2019:10). By self-mastering, the competency and inherent drive to continuously searching for meaning and purpose for yourself and having the courage, commitment and ability to embody the meaningfulness and purposefulness of the new unfolding trend for those you may have influence over, ensures sustainable prosperity during times of change.

◼ Competency #2: Value cross-functional collaboration

Collaboration and teaming across functional boundaries are vital for sustainable prosperity during times of transformation. Collaboration is key as no individual or organisation will be able to deal with the challenges ahead alone (Leurent & Shook 2019:10). Firstly, you and your organisation can only confront significant levels of disruption if you are both highly connected and well-networked across traditions, beliefs, and geographical and functional boundaries. As such, the goal should be connection and inclusivity. It is only through connection and collaboration with others that it becomes possible to develop a holistic perspective of what is going on and what may be lying on the horizon. In addition, functional collaboration is critical to developing and putting into practice integrated ideas and solutions that bring sustainable change and address widely shared challenges.

Thirdly, there are so many different constituent elements and issues involved that impact on the stability, steadiness and consistency of the unfolding conditions. Collaboration can

therefore only occur if it grows from an environment of trust. Only if you act in trust in a collaborative spirit, you could collectively ensure that the unfolding revolution is directed in a holistic way for the common good. In a world with no constants, it is vital to develop trust through a collective sense of a shared purpose and destiny.

In attainment thereof, each person must develop the quality to appreciate the value of diverse networks and the importance of functional collaboration. By developing and aligning yourself to this inherent quality, you or an organisation will be informed how to overcome obstacles, complete tasks and help make ethical decisions. It will also greatly assist in defining yourself in relation to your own personal goals and passions and the right of others to do the same.

■ Competency #3: Embrace openness and diversity

We are living in a time where society is made up of diverse cultures and where more generations live together than ever before. For this reason, it is imperative that a diversified array of cultures, beliefs, opinions, perspectives, values, aspirations and backgrounds should be embraced. The multicultural and heterogenic character of society and the economy require an openness to views and also embracing diversity in ways that leverage skills and cooperation across different social and cultural divides without limitations (Mdluli & Makhupe 2017:11). To function effectively in a cross-cultural, political and intellectual environment is a critical competency in order to thrive and prosper. People who embrace openness and diversity have a greater potential to drive a multiple perspective in a collaborative manner and have a better judgement that is founded on cultural, political and intellectual nuances.

In this regard, we wish to highlight three preconditions. Firstly, to effectively embrace openness and diversity requires a continuous sympathetic inclination. In order to be open to

diversified perspectives and to embrace diversity in a social, political or intellectual context requires a quality of character that balances needs, priorities and perspectives that are diversified in nature, scope and complexity. To this end, a continuous sympathetic inclination whereby the ideas, values, beliefs or perspectives of others are viewed and valued in the same proportion or having the exact value as your own, ought to be self-mastered. Secondly, it requires focussed and tailored communication that translates the various nuances, needs and priorities in a compelling vision and a tangible and inspiring plan of action. Thirdly, and perhaps most fundamentally, to navigate the diversified and complex issues, a value-based approach is needed of which the circumscribed framework of reference ought to be truth, trust, transparency and dexterity.

■ Competency #4: Having a teachable spirit

During times of change and revolution, as we experience now, people and organisations ultimately need to change themselves faster than the environmental changes around them. This means that people and organisations must change their mental and conceptual frameworks as well as organising principles. It is therefore, in today's changing circumstances, not very conducive to success, to think in 'silos' or have fixed views of the future. Such an attitude is indeed 'fossilising' (Schwab 2016:107–108). You should therefore not become isolated in your thoughts, insights and views. Your approach to problems, issues, challenges and opportunities should rather be holistic, flexible and adaptive in order to continuously integrate many diverse interests and opinions. Furthermore, the new realities demand that you become 'street savvy' and that you learn to think and act inclusively, consider the environment, other people and views and opportunities as they change (Mdluli & Makhupe 2017:8).

To ensure success, people and organisations ought to abandon old ways of doing and thinking and only keep those that are best for their people and organisations (Leurent & Shook 2019:9).

With the rapid change, the challenge is now to learn and act faster than the disruptions and challenges unfolding. This requires an experimental and adaptable attitude to disruption and challenges, instead of the traditional linear approach of analysis, planning and execution. When applying this adaptive approach, experimentation is key. It is advisable that the 'pilot-perfect' model in times of high velocity of change should make way for an approach that may be defined as a 'progress-perfection' model, meaning people and organisations ought to experiment rapidly and learn as they go and not to delay rollout until everything is perfect. The quality that you ought to master is therefore to have a teachable spirit that thrives on new learning, but most importantly, that is open to new ideas and not 'fossilised' in old dated ways. This ought to be an inherent quality if a person or an organisation is desirous to thrive and prosper in times of change.

■ Competency #5: Be creative, agile, resolute and emphatic

In today's ever-changing world, people and organisations alike must sustainably transform themselves whilst meeting present-day expectations and commitments. This generates constant tension between the need for transformation and the need to remain sustainable. This tension requires a fine balance between sustainability and responding to changes and opportunities (Leurent & Shook 2019:10). This means that in a personal and organisational context, an orchestrated effort between sustainability and growth is required. It requires a balancing act between agility and adaptability.

If you work from the proposition, like we recommend, that people's needs and expectations will evolve as quickly as the technology (Mdluli & Makhupe 2017:10), you will have to adapt quickly to the rapidly changing global context. This demands creativity, agility, resilience and being emphatic when acting. But our response ought to be realistic and in the whole, well-balanced. These are very important competencies to possess during times of change, to which we have given the acronym 'CARE'

(creative, agile, resolute and empathetic) to narrate the relevance and importance. In other words, if you do not 'CARE' enough, you may fail because procrastination and rigidity may render your efforts lacking power, strength or vigour because of the shifting and gravitational nature of modern life. If you 'CARE' too much, your nimbleness may cause trouble when you seize opportunities to act quickly and respond without due consideration to changing conditions. A fine balance ought to therefore be achieved between innovation, performing, reflecting, risking and defending (Mdluli & Makhupe 2017:10–11).

This means that your passion and the drive to succeed should be carefully balanced in times of transformation. As industries and the economy are continuously shifting and changing, every person and organisation have to hold onto their innate passion. Being passionate increases a person's or organisation's ability to remain relevant and ensure that a person or organisation continue to add value, make meaningful contributions and remain accountable for decisions and actions. By being passionate, a person musters the power of influence, continuously affects change and holds onto ideals more fervently than ever (BIZ Community 2019:5). However, during times of transformation, your passion ought to be balanced by the drive to succeed that ought to be realistic as well as holistic. In other words, one should have both purpose and meaning constantly in mind. Then the 'CARE' expressed will be in context. Your creativity, agility, resilience and emphatic expression will be realistic and holistic in a sense that it does not only advance your own interest but bears cognisance and comprehends the needs, feeling, problems and views of others as well as the unintended consequences. These are competencies that will be richly rewarded with prosperity and recognition in times of change.

◼ Competency #6: Support and nourishing personal health and wellbeing

Transformation is taxing and during times of additional complexities, mental and physical dexterity can be especially drained. Transformation also demands consistency and persistency

that may drain mental and physical capacities. Physical and mental intelligence is therefore a vital quality as the pace of change and complexities increases. It is then required to keep fit and to have mental dexterity to act with calm proficiency.

It is therefore necessary to heed the findings of epigeneticists (Schwab 2016:110), who have found irrefutable proof of how vitally important sleep is, together with nutrition and exercise. It is well-documented that frequent exercise positively affects how a person thinks and feels. These factors have a direct correlation with work performance and a person's success. A thorough understanding of how to keep one's mind and emotions fit, is incredibly important. As Schwab (2016:110–111) asserts 'good nerves are needed to navigate effectively the many simultaneous and complex challenges that we are all facing'. Likewise, 'good nerves' are needed to drive success in times of change. Supporting and nourishing personal health and wellbeing is a quality that we all should master.

◼ Competency #7: Harness technological advances and understand digital platforms

Having a fair understanding of digital platforms and technology advancement is crucial. Most people are indeed aware of Facebook, Twitter and many other applications. The potential of these platforms to advance personal and organisational growth should be unpacked and harnessed. The power of digital platforms must be turned into meaningful and purposeful outcomes. In attainment thereof, you ought to personally and in an organisational context develop the insight and competency to anticipate the technological trends and continuously realign personal abilities and vision (Mdluli & Makhupe 2017:9). The core competency or quality here is to be a disruptor instead of a 'disruptee' who merely follows. To have a high digital quotient means that a person needs to be flexible and possess wide intellectual curiosity and willingness to experiment and to see value in vastly different solutions and perspectives. Therefore, to

succeed in a disruptive era requires the quality of mind that of a 'disruptor' that harnesses technologies, understands digital platforms and has knowledge as to how technology can empower and how information can be employed as a resource (Mdluli & Makhupe 2017:9).

These are then the seven competencies that we reckon would be in high demand to advance employability, managing changing conditions and being competitive during this time of change. All in all, to thrive and prosper as the Fourth Industrial Revolution unfolds.

The Fourth Awakening

■ Reform movements

In Chapter 2, we began our exposé of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, by referring back to the 'Roaring Twenties' and the economic upswing at the time and then laid out the profound and systematic changes caused by the present-day technological advancements. We concluded with an outline of the core competencies needed to build a transformational character that could be responsive to the velocity, uncertainties and complexities of the unfolding technological revolution. We then narrated what we have labelled the 'VUMA-CHARACTER', which is a set of competencies that are very specific to the new trends unfolding. We now proceed from a different angle by explicating what is called the *Fourth Awakening* which is a present-day reform movement that is fundamentally changing human's attitude to life. This Reform Movement is reviving major dimensions of the present-day moral, ethical and economic conduct of humans. Whilst Chapter 2 established core competencies to respond effectively to the present-day technological changes, this chapter sets out to uncover those competencies required to deal with the

major attitudinal shifts in human conduct as it is unfolding today. The reason why we have decided to include the present-day 'awakening' in this exposé and briefly refer to the prior awakening, is founded upon the thesis that we cannot fully comprehend prevailing and future conditions without understanding their historical significance and context. Once we have established the present-day unfolding awakening within its historical significance and context, it would be prudential to predict the competencies of character that would be in high demand and specific to the unfolding trends, which is the purpose of the exposé in the first instance. In this chapter, we will explain, by setting forth in brief terms, what is referred to as the *'Fourth Awakening'* that contextualises particular moral, ethical and economic trends that are now unfolding. The Fourth Awakening is suggestive of a new skillset or set of competencies that would be in high demand because of the shift in the human mindset and human disposition. Contextualising the *Fourth* Awakening offers, if we may say so, a track record and empirical basis for identifying and formulating those competencies that would be most eligible or that would be most in demand and most responsive to and most capable in, dealing with the unfolding attitudinal changes in human conduct. Being aligned with these competencies can help making ethical decisions and help defining responses to the unfolding conditions in ways that could extract what is best in you as a human and what is best in the conditions unfolding.

The Fourth Awakening follows what is labelled as the 'Third Awakening' that occurred during the period prior to the 'Roaring Twenties'*.* The 'Fourth Awakening' is specific to the period from 1960 onwards. The intellectual constructs of the various awakenings are the works of William G. McLoughlin (1922–1992), a professor in history at Brown University and Robert W. Fogel (1926–2013), the 1993 Nobel Prize Winner in Economics and Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago School of Business. As will become more clear in the exposé that would follow, the original thesis and analysis by Fogel as published in his seminal work 'The Fourth Great Awakening & The Future of

Egalitarianism' (Fogel 2000) is very relevant today as the attitudinal changes that are occurring because of the Fourth Awakening since 1960 as described by Fogel, are still most observable today and would continue to increase in effect according to statistical data to 2040 and beyond.

In terms of the intellectual construct of McLoughlin and Fogel, the *Third Awakening* essentially relates to the spiritual, moral and economic renewal specific to the period 1880–1960 that focussed on material conditions and economic prosperity *to eliminate human spiritual deprivation*. The latter have been made possible, inter alia, by technological and economic progress during the period prior to 1960. In many respects, this period paved the way for the post-secular period characterised by the democratisation of individual self-realisation and constitute the foundational essence of the *Fourth Awakening* that began to unfold since the 1960s. The *Third Awakening* focussed on the equalities of conditions and as already alluded to, improvements in material conditions and material gratification on the pretext that spiritual advancement would follow from economic progress. Whilst the *Fourth Awakening* focussed on the inequalities in spiritual assets on the pretext that equality*, both political and economic, cannot be obtained without embodied personal awakening* (Meeks 2001:2). Human inequality and progress accordingly depend on how equitably we distribute knowledge and then principally, spiritual assets and embrace and comprehend ethical dispositions necessary for people to thrive and prosper in a knowledge economy created by the new technological advancements and extended life expectancy because of medical and other technologies. Essentially in terms of the Third and Fourth Awakening, the human discourse or attitude to economic prosperity at the time were founded at opposing discourses of human existence. *The Third Awakening* focussed on material progress to liberate humans spiritually and otherwise. *The Fourth Awakening* on the contrary focussed on the thesis that both political and economic liberation *cannot be obtained* without a personal and spiritual awakening.

The thesis of this chapter is that in comparing the Third and Fourth Awakenings, it is clear that the events now unfolding indicate that *the world has entered a de-materialisation phase and that immaterial assets rather than material assets, such as land and buildings are becoming the dominant resource for economic growth and prosperity.* There is also an awakening from materialism and a democratisation or growing public awareness and call for self-realisation. The shift in public awareness and human's attitude towards self-realisation has shifted the demand for specific spiritual assets and ethical dispositions as qualities of character. As the purpose of this chapter is to identify and elucidate those core competencies that are now in high demand because of the changing conditions, the following train of thought will be followed in support of our averment and purpose of this chapter. As we have to be brief in explaining the events leading up to the Fourth Awakening, we want to be upfront with our train of thought that we pursue to get to the point that we wish to further explicated, being the shift in human attitude and the moral, ethical and economic revival under the Fourth Awakening. The train of thought followed is:

- The modernists of the 'Third Awakening' through the two touchstones of *equality of conditions* and *consumer sovereignty* have made great strides in eliminating economic deprivation and scarcity.
- Secondly, the redistribution ethic of the modernist and the ethic of equality of conditions are declining in public acceptance and the discourse of the modernist that economic prosperity would lead to spiritual enlightenment has failed.
- Thirdly, there is a growing disgust with the materialism and self-indulgence in our consumption-obsessed society as it emerged during the 'Third Awakening'.
- The awakening from materialism and the emergence of the post-secular agenda of the *Fourth Awakening* are advancing a world in which immaterial assets are becoming the dominant resource in an open-knowledge-based economy.

- As the world is becoming more integrated, the immaterial assets are becoming more a-dogmatic and the growing movement to a unified-shared ethic is paving the way for multi-culturalism and the ordering of the hierarchy of different values that advance pluralism and an a-dogmatic ethic that supports greater equity of immaterial assets and a unique, authentic spiritual experience. This is a major building block in the de-materialisation process and the democratisation of self-realisation in a growing diversified society.
- In recent years, the ethic of *equality of opportunities* and the notion that we all should have an equal chance and right to self-realisation as opposed to the ethic of equality of conditions of the Third Awakening which focussed on equal conditions, for example work, social and health conditions, are once more, in the *Fourth Awakening,* assuming prominence as an ethic.
- That immaterial assets are in high demand, inter alia, because of the changing nature and distribution of the time and effort spend on working for a living and an increase in discretionary leisure time that allows a person to do what a person likes the most and has the greatest meaning as an expression of each person's authenticity and uniqueness.
- Technological and spiritual proficient people are in high demand. That requires fair access to spiritual assets and a better understanding of oneself, which can only be obtained through self-mastering and education.
- Finally, individual growth and prosperity are achievable by self-mastering specific competencies that are most susceptible to the unfolding trends of de-materialisation and the democratisation of self-realisation. By being aligned with these competencies, a person could be informed how a person ought to think and act, overcome obstacles and benefit from opportunities unfolding in a world that is increasingly de-materialising and becoming more receptive to and dependent upon immaterial assets that makes self-realisation the touchstone for greater prosperity.

In expounding the thesis of this chapter, the following pertinent aspects of the *Fourth Awakening* will be attended to. This will bring us closer to highlighting those competencies or commonly defined traits that we have to master in order to continue to thrive and prosper in a dematerialised society where spiritual proficiency in addition to technological proficiency will be richly rewarded as the open-knowledge based economy evolves:

- Firstly, under the heading 'March of the Modern Economy', we highlight the technophysio advances during the *Third Awakening* and the focus on the income variable and material gratification over human wellbeing.
- Secondly, we will expound, what is called the *democratisation of leisure time*, which is indicative of the changing conditions and the emergence of the *Fourth Awakening* as a new paradigm. The focus here is the changes in the nature of work and leisure.
- We will then contextualise the growing demise of and awakening from materialism that has been the essential paradigm of the *Third Awakening*. Here the focus will be on the collapse of the Gospel of Efficiency, the increasing consumer saturation and the beginning for a search for a deeper meaning and context of life that is unfolding under the *Fourth Awakening.* This section will also touch on the demise of the ethic of equality of conditions in favour of the re-emergence of the ethic of equality of opportunities.
- The growing prominence of the ethic of *equality of opportunity* as a standard or criteria of judgement in the *Fourth Awakening* will then be explained, though only briefly.
- The penultimate section will deal with, what Fogel referred to as, the *democratisation of self-realisation* and the spiritual immaterial assets that are unequally distributed and therefore in high demand.
- The final section will touch on the question how to realise one's full potential or how to acquire specific qualities of character particular to the changing circumstances, as part of a creative project of individual growth.

Let us start at the beginning and put together the building blocks of the chapter so that we may reach a vantage point, from where we could elucidate those competencies specific to the unfolding trends of the *Fourth Awakening.*

■ March of the modern economy

Modern economic growth and the associated technophysio evolution since the 1880s have pushed, in particular member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), onto a plane of economic progress unforeseen by the most optimistic of the modernist reformers (Fogel 2000:234). Income levels have also increased, and economic deprivation substantially eradicated, in many once poor countries other than the OECD countries. Income levels and economic scarcity have improved in non-OECD countries at rates far more rapid than seen in OECD nations. Nations that once lagged far behind the rich nations are now rapidly approaching them (Fogel 2000:235). A major reduction in the inequality of nations can likely be achieved in the next 50 years. According to Fogel (2000:239), despite temporary setbacks along the way, the merging market economies in Asia, Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East that represent more than half of the population of the world will continue to catch up with those of the OECD nations. Many of these countries including China are expected to reach current OECD levels of per capita income in a generation or less. Some may even match the OECD nations by the mid-21st century. A further noticeable world occurrence in the modern economy is that technological advances, first during the Roaring Twenties and now with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, have made a whole range of consumer durables so cheap and accessible that even poor households have adequate stock of appliances that during the 1960s onwards were reserved for the affluent or the stuff of fantasies in the first 30 years of the previous century (Fogel 2000:235). Moreover, appliances that were luxuries a generation

ago, not only have become the new normal but are now larger, more versatile, more durable and cheaper to buy and run (Fogel 2000:237). Another occurrence is the increased availability of food. Despite the ongoing rapid increase in the world's population, food, for instance, is likely to become more abundant. The fact is that advances in agricultural technology have made it possible to increase the food supply fivefold since the start of the 20th century with less land under grains than was the case half a century ago. Even without major breakthroughs in genetic engineering, it is possible to raise worldwide per capita consumption of food to recommended levels merely by extending known agricultural technologies to Third World nations (Fogel 2000:237). The spectacular increase in food production in China during the past two decades is an indicator of what is to come in other developing nations (Fogel 2000:237). Another example is the quality in clothing and housing that are improving, and more people are likely to have an adequate supply of both (Fogel 2000:237).

On the non-material side, many fundamental improvements have been made during the modern economy. Employment conditions have improved, and jobs are set to be remunerated better and to become more flexible. Salaries and wages have risen and will continue to increase because of both the increase in labour productivity and the higher levels of human capital embodied in the labour force (Fogel 2000:28). Human capital will further improve as more people will become educated and the education that they receive will continue to increase in quality. New innovative methods that facilitate lifelong education are rapidly expanding. Subjects once thought only at the college level are now routinely taught in better secondary schools (Fogel 2000:238–239). To add a further dimension, women are likely to break through more and more glass ceilings, partly because of demographic factors. Women in full-time professional and business occupations have become an increasing part of middle management and hence will be a larger part of the pool from which executives are drawn (Fogel 2000:238). The average work

year will continue to shrink and the average age of retirement will continue to decline as more and more workers feel they can afford to take on work or assignments that are more meaningful and fulfilling. A further improvement is occurring in the expansion of the service sector and advancement in computer technology will make jobs more flexible, with larger proportions of work performed at home, a larger proportion of labour force working part-time and enhanced opportunities to leave and re-enter the labour force as circumstances required. The rising importance of small businesses in the economy, many of which have been started by women will also create new opportunities. The occurrence will further advance and improve working conditions as small enterprises improve flexibility and the possibility of working from home. This may lead to a diminishing conflict between occupation retainment and family life (Fogel 2000:238–239). This process will most probably be speeded up because technology, which once promoted large-scale enterprises and separated the workplace from home, is now facilitating the reunification of workplace and home. Because the technological evolution is continuing, health will likely still improve, resulting in ever-better life expectancy. Not only is life expectancy 30 years longer today than during the 1880s but it is still increasing. It is well expected that the next generation will live into their late eighties or early nineties. Lifelong good health for the generation to come is a reasonable expectation, partly because the average age for the onset of chronic diseases will be delayed by 10 or more years, partly because of the increasing effectiveness of medical interventions for those who develop chronic diseases and partly because an increasing proportion of the population will never become severely disabled (Fogel 2000:236). What is more, research has shown that the betterment of one generation's physiology transfers to that of the next or even the third thereafter. The coming generations will therefore continue to benefit from the efforts with public health during the early and middle part of the last century (Fogel 2000:236–237). These and many more technophysio and technological improvements will most probably

continue as the Fourth Industrial Revolution unfolds. These improvements and more to come are inter alia responsible that food, clothing, education, health and shelter are now abundantly available, not only for the middle class or the typical worker but even for those who were designated as poor at the end of the 20th century (Fogel 2000:234).

It is clear that the world is materially richer and healthier than what the generations born in the 1880s encountered. Admittedly, the world has some major challenges, such as growing income inequalities, pollution, unfair distribution and consumption of food that results in excessive poverty in some areas and overeating in richer nations, and many more. These issues ought to be on the agenda of the *Fourth Awakening*. But for the purpose of our exposé, we will not deal with these challenges for now. What we would like to continue to highlight are the changes that the modern economy has caused in the nature and the distribution of work and leisure. From our observation, the latter have facilitated the present-day awakening from materialism and the emergence of the post-secular age with a growing focus on de-materialism and the democratisation of self-realisation. Our assertion, in fact, is that the major improvements made in the modern economy have changed the hours required to acquire the basic necessities inter alia because these necessities are more abundantly available at lower prices and secondly higher income levels because of improved conditions of employment and further technological advances such as flexiwork and gig work have resulted and most probably will continue so, to increase the discretionary time that is facilitating the movement to self-realisation. On the other side, growing anomalies that have occurred since the 1960s have facilitated the de-materialisation that is now occurring and the awakening from materialism.

For now, we will focus on the changes in the nature of work and leisure. Whereafter, we will touch on the awakening that is occurring with regards to the destructiveness of materialism and a renewed focus on spiritual values and de-materialisation that is

unfolding in the post-secular age that commenced in the 1960s and only now enters its political phase. All these events are determining the circumscribed space or conditions of the *Fourth Awakening* and the movement to a greater spirituality and consciousness in both economic and ordinary life upon which humanity could formulate a new way of doing and begin to master new qualities of character most susceptible to the changing times.

■ Changes in the structure of consumer demand

Over the last century, during the *Third Awakening* and the emergence of the modern economy since the Roaring Twenties, fundamental changes occurred in the time spend to earn a living, the time spend acquiring basic amenities, the available discretionary time and the time available for leisure. These changes have jointly changed human's outlook on life and human's worldview fundamentally, as will become apparent in the discussion to follow. These changes, inter alia, have arisen because of the major technophysio and technological developments during the emergence of the modern economy and then most particularly the increase in abundance of mainly the necessary commodities such as food, clothing, education, health and shelter. For instance, in the case of food, clothing and shelter, a typical household in OECD countries, has a century ago (1880–), spent 75% of household labour on these basic amenities. This has declined, as the availability of the basic amenities has increased, to less than 15% (1995 figures), either of the market or the household labour once required (Fogel 2000:190). At the beginning of the modern economy (1880-), households have spent 49% of household labour on food, 12% on clothing and 13% on shelter, making up almost 75% of expanded consumption. By the turn of the century (1995), the expenditure on food decreased to 5%, clothing 2% and shelter 6% or a total average of 13% of household expenditure. During the same period, household

expenditure on leisure, we will define the concept later on, increased from 18% to 68% (Fogel 2000:190). Associated with these structural changes in household expenditure is the substantial decline in the time required to do work with the particular purpose of earning an income to fulfil basic needs. At the beginning of the 20th century (1880–), the average men spent about 85 h per week in an average 365-day year to earn an income and to meet basic needs. This has declined to 47 h during 1995 and the prediction is that this will further decline to 3.8 h by 2040 (Fogel 2000:184).

All in all, allowing for illness, holidays and inclement weather, the typical worker in 1880 averaged about 3100 h of labour to earn a living per year. Since the 1880s, a considerable reduction has occurred. During 1995, the average work year was about 1730 h and the forecast (Fogel 2000:184–185) for 2040 is just 1400 h, with the average workweek down to 30 h and sick days at 12 days. These changes, inter alia, are because of changing working conditions. For instance, in the mid-19th century, most works occurred outdoors which meant that the hours worked were controlled by the 'rhythms of nature'. During the summer, hours of earnwork, or work to earn a living, were longer than in the winter. Year round the rule was that earnwork extended from sunset to sundown. During the late 19th and early-20th century, average hours of earn work gradually diminished as more and more earnwork moves indoors. Today, new work modes, such as gig work, cloud work, shared work, contract work because of telecommuting, hoteling and compressed work methods are evolving that are changing the work schedule. Work scheduling has therefore become far more flexible and permits workers to vary their hours or days of work.

What in fact is occurring is a large increase in discretionary time. Sleep, preparing meals and essential hygiene, which are biologically determined, still require the same amount of time as in 1880, about 10 h a day (Fogel 2000:184). The most noticeable feature is the large increase in discretionary time the typical male

worker has. Discretionary time over an average lifetime increased by 32% from 225 900 h during 1880 to 298 500 in 1995, with the expected total discretionary hours available to reach 321 900 h in 2040 or 42% more than at the beginning of the 20th century (Fogel 2000:189). During the same period, the hours worked to earn a living or to acquire basic amenities, over an average lifetime, decreased from 182 100 in the 1880s to 122 400 in 1995 and the prediction for 2040 is 75 900 or 40% of the hours recorded at the beginning of the 20th century (Fogel 2000:189). The hours worked to earn a living as a percentage of the lifetime discretionary hours available, decreased from 80% of discretionary time to 24% of discretionary time in 2040. Therefore, in the 1880s people spent four-fifths of their discretionary time on making a living. Today 59% goes to doing what we like. It seems that by 2040, more than 75% of the discretionary time will be available for us to fill with what we like, added to a further great increase in discretionary time as we will live longer (Fogel 2000:188). The predicated hours worked for a living as percentage of the available discretionary time may even be an overestimation as the millennials, as the largest workers group, are not entirely overwhelmed by work or doing work purely for the sake of earning a living or acquiring the monies for basic amenities. They do not measure success simply by how much their income increases or how rapidly they climb the corporate ladder. Although money matters, they value extended life experiences and a simpler lifestyle that place greater emphasis on such values as family time, shared relationships, good health, etc. (Fogel 2000:194). A poll conducted by U.S. News and World Report in the late 1995 reported that 48% of American adult workers had either reduced their work hours, chosen to opt out of a promotion, reduced their commitments, reconsidered their material expectations or moved someplace that offers a quieter lifestyle over the preceding five years. Those who preferred more free time even if it meant less income, outnumbered by about three to two those who preferred to earn more money even it required more time (Fogel 2000:194).

So, essentially what transpired during the modern economy since the 1880s is threefold. Namely, a gradual, though at the end a substantial, decrease in the time spend on 'earnwork', or the time needed to earn income to live. Secondly, a concomitant increase in discretionary time. Thirdly, a concomitant increase in time spend on what Fogel defined as 'Volwork' or doing what a person enjoys the most. Before we go too far, let us clarify these two terms, namely 'earnwork' and 'volwork'.

Fogel reserves the word 'work' for use in its physiological sense (Fogel 2000:187) or as he defines it: '[as] an activity that requires energy over and above basal metabolic rate' (Fogel 2000:187). Fogel argues that in future, as the average workweek declines towards 28 h and retirement routinely begins at age 55 (Fogel 2000:187), the term 'work' will increasingly mean 'activity under the compulsion of earning income regardless of whether the effort is manual or mental' (Fogel 2000:187). But for the present analysis, Fogel called activity aimed primarily at 'earning a living' as 'earnwork' (Fogel 2000:187). Fogel reserved the term 'volwork' 'for purely voluntary activity, even if it incidentally earns some payment with it' (Fogel 2000:187). Purely voluntary activity is then regarded by Fogel (2000:187) as 'leisure' that has the similar characteristics of the English Gentry or Veblen's American 'leisure-class', although it may, incidentally, produce an income. 'Leisure in this context' argued Fogel (2000:186) 'is not a synonym for indolence but a reference to desirable forms of effort'. Fogel cites George Bernard Shaw's averment that '*Labour* is doing what we must; *Leisure* is doing what we like, rest is doing nothing, whilst our bodies and our minds are recovering from their fatigue' (Fogel 2000:187). As Fogel refers to the characteristics of the English Gentry or Veblen's American 'Leisure-Class' in order to describe what he means with the term 'leisure'*,* let us just define what these characteristics are. The distinction between 'earnwork' and 'volwork' goes back to the time when a distinction was made between 'work' and 'leisure' to denote, according to Fogel's thesis, that 'work' refers to doing 60 h or 70 h of manual labour per week, as opposed to the esteemed activities of the British

Gentry or the American equivalent of Thorstein Veblen's 'leisure-class'. The members of the so-called 'leisure-class' were not regarded as indolent. Members of the 'leisure-class' in their youth were students and athletes. In their young adult years, they were warriors and in their middle age and beyond, they were judges, ministers of state, parliamentarians, bishops, others in high office, landlords, merchants, princes and patrons of the arts. The important distinction between the 'working-class' and the 'leisure-class' is that the latter group of people according to Fogel (2000:187) did what they do 'for the pleasure it gave them since they were so rich that earning money was not their concern'.

Let us now go back to continue the train of thought, as to what transpired during the emergence of the modern economy since the 1880s and that reached its full political stage during the 1960s–1980s. Mindful of the definitions that Fogel's averment relied upon, we can deduce that Fogel's analysis of the unfolding trends since the 1880s is suggestive of the following:

- The distribution of expanded consumption on basic amenities such as food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education decreased from 76% in the 1880s to 27% in 1995 with 14% spend on healthcare and education alone (Fogel 2000:190).
- Leisure or the distribution of expanded consumption on 'doing what we like' increased from 18% in the 1880s to 68% in 1995.
- In the same period, the time used for work-related activities, in other words, doing what we must to earn a living, decreased from 8.5 h in the 1880s to 4.7 h in 1995 and will continue to decrease to 3.8 h in 2040 (Fogel 2000:184).
- The residual for leisure activities or doing what we like or that what is giving us the greatest pleasure, increased from 1.8 h in the 1880s to 58 h in 1995 and a further increase to 72 h is predicted for 2040 (Fogel 2000:184).
- The lifetime distribution of discretionary time spend on 'earnwork', or primarily earning a living, is decreasing from 80% of the total lifetime discretionary hours in the 1880s to the predicted 24% in 2040 (Fogel 2000:189).

- The lifetime hours spend on purely voluntary activities, though it might earn some income, but is pursued for the pleasure a person derives from it, is increasing from 20% of the total discretionary time variable in the 1880s to the predicted 75% in 2040 with only 25% of discretionary hours set aside for doing 'earnwork' or to earn a living (Fogel 2000:189).

What are the implications for us today? Firstly, the share of lifetime hours spent on working for a living has become exceptionally small by both historical and Third World standards (Fogel 2000:178). Secondly, the change in the structure of consumer demand has created overabundance in some areas and dire shortages in others. We eat excessive calories and fat but do not have health services at all ages. Today in rich countries, overeating is a more common problem than undereating. Thirdly, today, even ordinary people have the time to be lavish consumers of amenities, whilst in the 1880s it has been only the rich that were lavish spenders (Fogel 2000:189). Fourthly, 'leisuretime' is being democratised or differently put, is becoming more accessible to everyone. More and more people experience an abundance of leisure time; in other words, they have more time to do things that they derive pleasure from, than working to earn a living in order to buy the basic amenities of food, clothing, healthcare, education and shelter. The question then arises, how the extra hours or income over and above what is needed for the acquisition of basic amenities, is distributed. Or differently said, the way the hours available for leisure over and above the hours allocated for 'earnwork' or the hours needed to earn a living, are distributed. As it turns out people in rich nations spend some of their extra income to buy more and better food, clothing and shelter and other more luxurious commodities (Fogel 2000:184). But perhaps of far greater importance, Fogel (2000:186) argues that the 'lion's share of the increase in income has been spent on purchasing of "leisure"'. However, as already alluded to, the time distributed to 'leisure' in this context is not associated with indolence or idleness and laziness – doing nothing (Fogel 2000:187). The purchasing of

'leisure' in this context is a reference to what Fogel (2000:187) describes as 'desirable forms of effort or work' or as George Bernard Shaw said 'doing work that we like' (Fogel 2000:187). Irrespective of whether it produces an income or not (Fogel 2000:187). Spending on leisure therefore may include amenities that in Fogel's words 'broaden the mind, enrich the soul and relieve the monotony of most earnwork' (Fogel 2000:235). This, inter alia, may include activities such as travelling, athletics, the performing arts, education and shared time with family. The principal cost of these activities is often measured, not by cash outlays, but by outlays of time (Fogel 2000:191). Spending on leisure may also include doing work or engage in activities, for an income or otherwise, that according to Fogel's thesis 'offer great pleasure' (Fogel 2000:187) or 'a deeper understanding of the meaning of life' (Fogel 2000:189). The most pertinent implication of the growing abundance of leisure time for us today is, as Fogel asserts, a growing search or rather quest for a 'deeper understanding of the meaning of life [that] fuels engagement with the issues of the Fourth Great Awakening' (Fogel 2000:189). This unfolding trend is giving rise to a new awakening that, according to McLoughlin's and Fogel's thesis, are referenced to as the *Fourth Awakening* or a new trend of de-materialisation, a return to the ethics of Equality of Opportunities, the democratisation of self-realisation, a higher demand for spiritual assets, and a renewed awareness and focus that equitable growth can only be attainable by reaffirming traditional values and avoiding further cultural, moral and ethical decay of society. All in all, the focus has shifted to a world in which immaterial assets are becoming a dominant resource over and above land, building and capital.

In the remainder of this chapter, we will focus the attention on the unfolding trends that are evolving, inter alia, because of the democratisation of 'leisuretime' or the increase in discretionary time available for 'leisure activities'. We are of the view that this will bring us closer to contextualise and appreciate

the qualities of character and values that are needed as the *Fourth Awakening* unfolds and the nature of work and leisure continue to change inter alia, because of changes in human's awareness and consciousness, but also as technological advances continue to drive change from now until the mid-term of this century. The following most noticeable trends, according to our observation of the unfolding *Fourth Awakening* will now be expounded:

• the awakening from materialism
• re-emergence of the ethic of Equality of Opportunities
• the quest for self-realisation.

These trends, separately and jointly, are indicative of one overarching phenomenon, being that people are ever more concerned with the meaning of life and how they can realise their unique and authentic potential as a human being. The ordinary individuals in the 1880s were not concerned with this; most of the day went into securing basic amenities needed to sustain life, such as food, clothing and shelter (Fogel 2000:191). Two decades from now (2030–2040), perhaps even sooner, when the increase in productivity and other technological advances will make it possible to provide an abundance of goods with less than a half-day of labour, the issues of the meaning of life and each person's self-realisation will take up most of the discretionary time (Fogel 2000:192). With these changes, as will become clearer in the exposé to follow, the qualities of character or commonly defined qualities that we look for in individuals will also change according to time. These changes are fundamental to human's continued prosperity and hence ought to be self-mastered by those who are desirous to thrive and prosper under the changing conditions. What now follows is a brief analysis of the most noticeable trends that are suggestive of those unique traits of characteristics that would be in high demand. This chapter will conclude by summarising six qualities of character that are deemed most susceptible to the unfolding conditions.

■ Awakening from materialism

In an aforesaid section, we iterate the fact that the technophysio advances since the 1880s have pushed many nations, especially the OECD nations, onto a plane of economic prosperity unforeseen by the most optimistic of the modernist reformers. We have also explicated some of the most noticeable changes in the nature and distribution of the time allotted to work and leisure. What is most noticeable from the modernist movement since the 1880s is that the modernists movement focussed on a variable – money income (Fogel 2000:236). This indisputably brought about material prosperity and fundamental changes in the time spend on earning a living and the time spend on leisure, because of the increase in discretionary time concomitant to the increase in prosperity. During this time, what McLoughlin and Fogel labelled as the Third Great Awakening, the focus has been on material egalitarianism or to ensure, more playfully said, 'a chicken in every pot' (Wall 2001:26). This has been achieved by bringing about greater equality in material conditions and by stimulating production through increased consumer demand. During the first phase of the Third Awakening, the Modernists focussed on improvements in the material circumstance associated with poverty, slum housing, excessive working hours, dangerous working conditions, periodic or systemic unemployment, poor education and so forth. The second phase of the Third Awakening that started in the 1930s focussed on greater and consistent growth in production by encouraging a continued increase in spending and consumption. This is the period of unfettered consumerism or consumer sovereignty and a phase in human history when material advances and commerce have been championed over human wellbeing and the wellbeing of the environment. The second phase began to taper off slowly, but continuously, since the 1980s.

Although the world has become a materially richer place, the Third Awakening did not fulfil the promise of inspiring the human mind and overcoming social and spiritual estrangements that are

undermining the quality of life and human's potential. As Fogel (2000:3) asserts: 'the focus on the income variable did not bear on the capacity of individuals to overcome the social estrangement that undermines their quality of life'. According to Fogel's analysis of the Third Awakening, the proposition that material improvement would ennoble the masses so widely embraced by the modernists did not materialise but did more to promote the consumerism of the 1930s than to produce spiritual regeneration. This averment is similar to that of the Parliament of the World's Religions, who set the critical issues of our time in stark contrast to the initial overarching purpose of the Third Awakening. According to the Parliament (1999:8), the scourges of the present day are disintegrating communities, constant pressure on our limited natural resources, growing injustice, a greater divide between rich and poor, and spiritual indirection. As Wall (2001:26) argues, 'the Third Awakening resulted in a material pollution and a political determination to champion commerce over the public wellbeing'. This resulted in three main anomalies that are inter alia the main causes for the demise of consumerism as the last touchstone of the Third Awakening and the concomitant awakening from materialism that is now unfolding. *Firstly,* whilst the *Third Awakening* and then most notably the second phase, namely consumerism focussed on material prosperity and continued increase in consumption and spending, what followed is indeed the opposite, namely a stage of saturation in the demand for commodities once regarded as showcasing a high standard of living or a good quality of life (Fogel 2000:189). This saturation in commodities may in some extent be attributed to the fact that the ethic of *Equality of Conditions* and *consumer sovereignty* that underscored the *Third Awakening* have indeed been effective in some degree. *Secondly,* the *Third Awakening* promoted the discourse that material advancement would lead to spiritual enlightenment, resulting in a disenchantment with materialism and a disgust in our self-indulgent consumption-obsessed society. Material redistribution proved not to eliminate vice, crime and other anti-social behaviour (Hull 2002:30). The

focus on consumerism did more to improve the body than the mind and the spirit. The reforms over the last century and then in particular the consumer culture of the 1960s onwards undermined morality as well as personal accountability and responsibility (Hull 2002:30). With the result that a new set of distributional issues are arising in rich nations. This is because of the enormous changes in the structure of the consumer demand over the last 30 to 40 years, which are creating overabundance in some areas and severe shortages in others. *Thirdly*, the ethic of redistribution and *Equality of Conditions* that were the locus of the *Third Awakening* are declining and the ethic of *Equality of Opportunities* with the emphasis on self-realisation are regaining their prominence. More about that will be discussed in a later section. These anomalies and further technological advances of the Fourth Industrial Revolution are inter alia giving rise to an awakening from materialism and a new paradigm of de-materialisation. As John V. Harmann (in Liebig 1994:19) argues: 'I think the strategy of evolution for the next 200 years is de-materialisation' Harmann continue his averment by referring to the technological advances of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, with product technologies going from steel to plastic; from goods that can be weighed to the unseen 'cloud'; and computers that evolved from the tube to the transistor, to the chip to superconductivity, etc. Harmann reckons that the other side of the coin is 'spiritualisation' (Liebig 1994:19) with more mind coming in, with matter moving out a little more. The model underlying Harmann's thesis, in his words, 'resembles Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, but involves the evolution of values' (Liebig 1994:19). At the bottom level is matter. Then the next level is *information* followed by *communication* (Liebig 1994:19). In Harmann's point of view, communication involves feelings, sensing, expressing, demonstrating and realising what a person means and what a person really values. In Harmann's mind, the Western Industrial society is on the way up from information to communication values (Liebig 1994:19). Harmann argues that knowledge together with power, money and luxuries

have been very important. But as we move deeper into the de-materialisation zone of the communication age, we are moving, Harmann points out, into an age where wisdom is worth more than sex; personal enlightenment is worth more than money and luxuries (Liebig 1994:19). As the process of de-materialisation evolves, we are moving from quantitative thinking and material goods that can be weighed and counted, to qualitative thinking and expanded experiences. As Harmann so aptly put it: 'We are moving from being quantitative beings, owning five cars and three homes, to a qualitative form of being' (Liebig 1994:19). These views of Harmann certainly struck a chord with those of Fogel who points out that it is the exponential increase in leisure time that advances the search for a deeper understanding of the meaning of life and that fuels the quest for self-realisation (Fogel 2000:189).

Because people have to spend less on basic amenities, they have more discretionary time to do what they like and find pleasure in. This is why people today are searching for greater and more meaningful experiences that match their values, aspirations and eschatological beliefs. Therefore, as the awakening from materialism and the search for greater meaning and substance in life evolve, the post-secular concerns are more about an a-dogmatic spiritualness and a fuller life of meaningful experiences. The quest for self-realisation and the desire to find deeper meaning in life beyond the endless consumption and accumulation of consumer durables and the pursuit of hedonistic pleasures and instant gratification will be on the agenda, as the *Fourth Awakening* unfolds. 'Unlike the reform agenda of the *Third Awakening*' wrote Fogel (2000:176), 'that of the Fourth emphasizes the spiritual needs of life'. Indeed, it represents an awakening from secularism, materialism and hedonistic pleasures and a movement to true deeply founded individual experiences of life. A movement to unique and authentic experiences that resonate personal values, aspirations and eschatological beliefs. This is the beginning of the post-secular age and an awakening from the doctrine of materialism, instant gratification and

hedonistic pleasure. A new beginning, as Harmann so firmly asserts, of a journey where self-directed consciousness will be raised and that will transcend materialism (Liebig 1994:20). Indeed, a watershed moment as Harmann (Liebig 1994:20) shows because the world has reached a tipping point. A world is evolving in which immaterial assets are becoming the dominant asset. As Fogel (2000:194) points out: 'a world and an economy where economic growth will no longer be entirely reliant on material capital'. Labour skills, today called human capital or knowledge capital, have become the main form of capital today. It is no longer buildings, powerful machinery or electricity. Hence, the material-based economy is becoming a knowledge-based economy. Perhaps Adam Smith has been right all these years. Because he was of the view that economic growth depends on human freedom and freedom leads to prosperity. But freedom only comes with being a sensible and reasonable person who organises his or her life around spiritual values and virtues. By so doing instil and display greater consciousness when expressing individual ingenuity, thriftiness and industriousness. These classical ethical and economic thoughts of Adam Smith have been carefully replaced during the modern economy by *Positivism, Humanism* and *Material Determinism*. But the tide is changing. The process of de-materialisation is most evident during the last six or so decades (Fogel 2000:194) as the domination of output by material products began to erode at an increased rate (Fogel 2000:194). The rise to dominance of immaterial assets is becoming more evident as the awakening from materialism unfolds and the search for a greater meaning and spirituality in the post-secular age escalates.

We will continue this train of thought and elucidate the two touchstones of the *Fourth Awakening*. Firstly, the return to the ethic of *Equality of Opportunities*. Secondly, we will elucidate the growing quest for self-realisation and the qualities of character that are now highly in demand. As such, the two building blocks, as touchstones of the *Fourth Awakening,* offer standards and criteria upon which we can construct the qualities of character

that will be in high demand in order to be thriving, prosperous and competitive in an open-knowledge economy. We will conclude the chapter by explicating the increased demand for immaterial assets and how this may be realised in a growing knowledge-based economy.

■ Equality of opportunities

During the Puritan Awakening, which began in 1640, followed by the Great Awakening from 1730 to 1760 or the so-called Calvinists era, and the Second Great Awakening or the Arminian era from 1800 to 1830, the emphasis was on the spiritual transformation the individual soul should undergo (Carlin 2000:36). At the time, the focus has been on individual conditions and self-expression. The Liberal and Modernist of the Third Great Awakening that followed from 1880 to 1980 focuses on material conditions or the ethic of *Equality of Conditions.* The ethic of *Equality of Conditions* and *Equality of Opportunities* have been the touchstone, of what Fogel (2000:5) referred to as the equalitarian progress. According to Fogel's thesis, the ethic of *Equality of Opportunities* as previously mentioned, but repeated here for completeness, accepts as natural the income inequalities and other varying circumstances of life but proposes that persons at the lower ranks of society should pull themselves up into the top economic and social orders by industry, perseverance, talent and righteousness (Fogel 2000:5). The ethic of *Equality of Conditions* focuses on the other hand on material and social conditions, civil rights, etc. With the emergence of various anomalies during the *Third Awakening,* the focus shifted to individual self-realisation and away from the ethic of *Equality of Conditions* that has been the touchstone of the *Third Awakening*. In recent years, the ethic of *Equality of Opportunities* is assuming its former glory. The return to the old ethic is partly because of the greater emphasis on individual responsibility, personal performance, agility and accountability. It is also due partly to the success of the entitlement programmes and the substantial

increase in the income variable and material progress which have significantly improved the living conditions of ordinary people (Fogel 2000:6). The agenda has now shifted away from the variable income because of the realisation that additional income alone will not ensure the elimination of inequalities and the advancement of human wellbeing in general and in particular human freedom. The newly emerging equity issues according to Fogel (2000:6) are now inter alia the following: (1) pension rights, (2) access to medical care and wellness support programmes, (3) expanded and continued education opportunities, (4) accessibility to leisure time activities, (5) labour flexibility and (6) the integration of work and family. To these may be added: (7) focus on expanded experiences, (8) talent mobility, (9) collaborative engagements, (10) diversity and multi-culturism, (11) human creativity and (12) human vitality and wellness.

These issues are now considered to elevate the ethic of *Equality Opportunities* to the fore, which in turn, advances authentic individualism but not solipsism nor socialism. The focus is now on individual virtuosity and the self-mastering of immaterial qualities rather than on equality of material conditions and income optimisation as the variable for economic prosperity. This return to the ethic of *Equality of Opportunities* is according to Fogel (2000:236) not a retreat, but a recognition that at a very high average income and improved material conditions, individual wellbeing through self-realisation becomes the critical issues. However, the ethic of *Equality of Opportunities* is now determined less by the command of physical capital than by the end of the 19th century (Fogel 2000:236). The focus now is on immaterial assets. Spiritual capital will for the foreseeable future be in high demand, especially command of those knowledge sets and qualities of character the marketplace rewards heavily (Fogel 2000:236). These assets and qualities of character inform how we ought to think about and engage in opportunities of self-realisation. In other words, what we consider as wholesome and what we like the most and gained the greatest pleasure from. In short, that what revitalises and inspires the human spirit,

invigorating the mind and improving the vitality of the human body. The locus of the new awakening in the post-secular age is therefore those immaterial qualities of character that could inform how individuals, of all ages, young and old, could express themselves and realise their full potential through collaborative or shared engagements within a highly culturally diversified environment. Today immaterial qualities of character are therefore becoming the dominant form of wealth and equity in an ethical and cultural sense, both domestically and internationally. These qualities of character ought to be the locus of a post-secular egalitarian process to ensure that the greatest number of people are aligned with qualities of character that advance ethical decision and help to define a person in relation to personal and societal aspirations, goals and duties. By self-mastering these qualities of character, an individual person would be able to pursue the quest for self-realisation with far greater sensibility and steadiness.

■ Shift from materialism to expanded experiences

In the aforesaid sections, we have attempted to highlight the changing trends in the post-secular age and the emergence of the Fourth Awakening. In the analysis, we have elucidated the following prominent trends. Firstly, technophysio advancements over the last 100 years have advanced human prosperity and reduced the time required to earn a living and acquiring the basic amenities such as food, clothing and shelter, thereby increasing discretionary time. Initially, rich nations that are members of the OECD have reached that level of prosperity first. But the nations from Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa are now catching up and will achieve similar levels of prosperity by the mid-21st century. Secondly, these changes in the level of prosperity coupled with the increase in discretionary time and the awakening from materialism are giving rise to a new ethic of *Equality of Opportunities* and a quest for self-realisation. Thirdly, technophysio

evolution since the 1880s and the renewed awakening since the 1960s, according to Fogel's thesis (2000:190), have broadened the quest for self-realisation from a small fraction of the world's population to a large majority. Today and more so in the future, the quest for self-realisation will further evolve in intensity and scope. What is expected is that humans will not merely continue to fulfil their desires, no matter how debased that might be, as has been the case with the emergence of consumerism from the 1930s onwards. Fourthly, the world today and more so in the future will move into an age of de-materialisation and a renewed focus on human character that are founded on immaterial assets rather than informed by materialism and determinism. Immaterial qualities of character are becoming the dominant form of wealth and equity in a spiritual and ethical sense. What is now in high demand are immaterial qualities of character that could provide the circumscribe framework for the quest of self-realisation in a post-secular age where the focus has shifted away from materialism to expanded authentic and unique experiences. There is indeed a growing realisation that endowment of immaterial qualities of character are needed to inform the quest of self-realisation in order to remain thriving and prosperous in the rapidly changing post-secular open talent and knowledge-based economy.

What now follows is a list of those immaterial assets that Fogel (2000:205) identified as in high demand and most unequally distributed. Fogel does not attempt to demonstrate why the list of immaterial assets should be treated as more complete and more applicable than some others. For instance, why not those of the classical philosophers and ethicists such as Adam Smith or Thomas Aquinas should not be in even higher demand. Though one may argue that any of the other 'sets' would seem equally eligible, we are of the view that the list of immaterial assets is indicative of these qualities of character that are now high in demand, considering the unfolding events of the *Fourth Awakening* and the process of de-materialisation that are unfolding in the post-secular age. We therefore hold the view that the list of immaterial assets that Fogel identified, if properly

contextualised would greatly inform and guide us further in developing and articulating those unique traits or characteristics that are most befitting to the overarching desire to be successful and competitive in the unfolding post-secular economy that is founded on knowledge and communication values and characterised by its openness and diversity. The 15 spiritual resources that Fogel (2000:205) has identified are:

- sense of purpose
- vision of opportunity
- sense of the mainstream of work and life
- strong family ethic
- sense of community
- capacity to engage with diverse groups
- ethic of benevolence
- a work ethic
- a sense of discipline
- capacity to focus and concentrate one's efforts
- capacity to resist the lure of hedonism
- capacity of self-education
- a thirst for knowledge
- an appreciation for quality
- good self-esteem.

For the purpose of our analysis to identify and articulate unique traits and the best qualities of character for the changing time, we will summarise the aforesaid six qualities using the same template that we have employed in Chapter 2.

■ Competency #1: Continuously searching for meaning and purpose

Fogel considers a *sense of purpose* as the most important quality. The sense of purpose and meaning are the most lacking. Deprivation of this sense is widespread amongst the alienated young and depressed elderly. Having the personal quality to continuously searching for meaning and purpose is a vital quality

of character needed to be competitive and successful in an open talent, shared, diversified and knowledge economy. More so in the new age where people continuously looking for authentic and unique experiences and the growing inclination to associate with people who possess and articulate similar values and aspirations. Fogel identifies two further qualities of character that are very much related to the first. Firstly, Fogel considers that a person without a *vision of opportunities* may be confined to persistent poverty. Fogel (2000:205) cites William J Wilson, Professor of Sociology at Harvard, that relates persistent poverty to having a lack of, or worse, no vision of opportunity. Without having the quality of character or defined quality of seeing and searching for opportunities, there cannot be a purposeful quest for self-realisation. We also agree with Fogel (2000:205) that even with such a vision, opportunities cannot be realised if a person lacks a sense of virtuous purpose and meaning in life. Having the tenor of character that is virtuous is key to fulfil a purposeful and meaningful vision. Secondly, for a person to pursue opportunities of self-exploration and self-realisation, young and old require what Fogel (2000:205) refers to as 'a sense of the mainstream of work and life'. This refers to a sense of where opportunities are and how to pursue them. The young need this sense if they are to develop their ideas of how they want to exercise their opportunities. The old, if they are to see how they can fit into the new world and how to reinvent themselves. This requires the quality of character to be adaptable, flexible and well networked and appreciative of collaborative engagements. Well networked people, who have the character qualities required for collaborativeness, would have a far greater sense of the mainstream of opportunities in both work and life.

■ Competency #2: Value cross-functional collaboration

Collaborativeness and networking are key qualities of character to be aligned within an open-knowledge-based economy. Fogel

identifies three important qualities of character in support of the overarching quality of collaborativeness. These qualities are *a strong family ethic*, *sense of community* and *ethic of benevolence.* Of these, Fogel considers a *strong family ethic* as perhaps the most important. Fogel has here in mind more than just a belief in the value of the traditional family. There must be, according to Fogel, 'a palpable commitment on the part of the parents to love their children above all others, a commitment that their children can count on unequivocally'. Fogel also explicates the importance of an intergenerational commitment where children are committed to giving to their children what they received from their parents. The mature children must also be prepared to provide comfort when parents are no longer able to care for themselves. Fogel also elucidates the *sense of community* as complimentary to the strong family ethic. A sense of community with other outside the family, a solidarity with neighbours, ethnic compatriots, co-religionists, professional colleagues, members of one's race and gender are considered by Fogel (2000:206) as important. The collaboration ought to extend beyond mere 'networking' but should find expression through an *ethic of benevolence.* An ethic of benevolence encompasses a resolve to be of service to others, not because of the esteem attached to givers of charity but as Fogel asserts 'because of a considered duty to humanity and a commitment to make the world a better place' (Fogel 2000:206).

◼ Competency #3: Embrace openness and diversity

This quality of character is very much related to the aforesaid. In an open society as we are experiencing in even greater extent as ever before, diversity is an inescapable part of life. In an open competitive world, the *capacity to engage with diverse groups* is key. According to Fogel's thesis, solidarity and a strong family ethic are very important immaterial resources to facilitate the transition from kin solidarity to a capacity to engage with diverse groups.

To develop the personality qualities of working with diverse groups and engage with peoples of diverse thoughts, beliefs and cultures, one must appreciate, learn from and have the capacity to lead or follow foreigners and other strangers. According to Fogel (2000:206), this engagement with diverse groups outside a person's immediate family and support network must be based on an ethic of benevolence and to be of service to others.

■ Competency #4: Be creative, agile, resolute and emphatic

Self-realisation requires individual creativity and agility whilst being resolute and emphatic in conduct. In attainment thereof, four individual qualities of character are elucidated by Fogel (2000:206). Firstly, a *strong work ethic* is essential. To many individual persons, self-realisation is achievable, to some degree through an occupation. Success in occupations requires a quality of character that promotes a *strong work ethic*. What is needed are qualities of character that embrace work and to complete duties as being both morally justifiable and pleasurable. A strong work ethic is founded on the view that work is a moral duty. It is an ethic that embraces the idea that work is a moral duty, that if a task is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well and is never complete until done perfectly and with the necessary excellence. Secondly, success requires a *sense of discipline.* Fogel does not consider a sense of discipline a talent, but a honed pattern of behaviour or character trait that is key to an era in which the ethic of equality of opportunities is valued. Discipline pertains not only to an occupation but to all aspects of life. It is a necessary quality in all purposeful activities for those who desire to be explorative and realising their purpose and meaning in life. Thirdly, supplementary to the sense of discipline is the capacity *to focus and concentrate on one's effort.* In an open-knowledge-based economy with a myriad of opportunities and choices, the capacity to focus and concentrate one's efforts is a key quality of

character to inform how to respond and think about opportunities and challenges. Procrastination and confusion are synonyms with the new open society and by aligning oneself to the important quality of being focussed and concentrated on one's effort is vital to thrive, prosper and remain competitive. Finally, the *capacity to resist the lure of hedonism* is an essential quality in order to remain disciplined and focussed, maintaining a work ethic and build a capacity to concentrate on one's efforts. The quality to resist the lure of hedonism, the control of self-indulgence and to remain faithful to commitments, despite a strong impulse and many distractions, are vital qualities of character to optimise discretionary time and are very helpful in making ethical decisions befitting to a person's circumstances, time, status and proficiency.

◼ Competency #5: Having a teachable spirit

In an open-knowledge-based economy, knowledge is key. The capacity for self-education and having a teachable spirit are very important qualities of character and very much befitting of the individual's quest for self-realisation. Typically, the successful realisation of a person's goals requires a *capacity for self-education* along the way. This is particularly relevant as a continuous stream of new knowledge is made available through advanced technologies. Particularly, in times of technological advancement as we experience now in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the velocity and growing uncertainty, precipitate fundamental changes in the job market, conditions of trade, etc., that require the capacity for self-education in order to continuously reinvent oneself and to remain relevant and competitive. Self-education is furthermore facilitated by a *thirst for knowledge* that requires the quality of being open to new ideas, thoughts and opinions. As a precondition, one has to have the quality of being able to suspend personal bias and having the quality of character of humility, tolerance and self-differentiation. Without these qualities of character, a person would find it cumbersome,

confusing and tedium to unlearn, learn and relearn in times of continued change like we experience now. Without these qualities, a person would quickly lack familiarity and become unacquainted with the fundamentals of a particular field of knowledge or circumstances. Having a teachable spirit is therefore a fundamental quality that would be required to bring life to any quest for self-realisation in a volatile and uncertain world. Furthermore, any ambitious quest for self-realisation requires an *appreciation for quality*. We therefore concur with Fogel (2000:206) that very often the difference between an average performance and an outstanding one rests in the discernment of detail. Quality, accordingly, involves pushing beyond the obvious and taking intellectual risks. An appreciation for quality, facilitated by quality of character to think and act holistically would create the greatest possible perspective by continuously and meticulously connecting the dots. This quality of character is very much related to the quality of continuously searching for meaning and purpose and having a teachable spirit that remains open to the new discoveries and views.

■ Competency #6: Support and nourishing personal health and wellbeing

According to Fogel's analysis of the immaterial assets, *self-esteem* is needed to assimilate these qualities. A belief in one's capacity to succeed in an undertaking of self-realisation is crucial. The more ambitious the undertaking, the higher the level of self-esteem is required. By being aligned to all these qualities of character, a person would enjoy a higher level of self-esteem. The level of self-esteem shall be befitting to the challenges and obstacles that are in the way to complete a set of tasks in a manner that resonates with a person's authentic and unique desire for self-realisation.

These then are the qualities of character that are high in demand in the Fourth Awakening that values and advances self-

realisation and greater equality in individual opportunities. Since people have to possess a moderate measure of each quality to build a good self-esteem, the question before us now is: how these qualities ought to be mastered? Essentially, these qualities have to be self-mastered according to each person's circumstances, conditions and desire for self-realisation. Ultimately, it remains a creative project of individual growth. In the last segment to follow, we will highlight some pertinent aspects for consideration in promoting and mastering these qualities.

■ Creative project of individual growth

People possess the qualities discussed in the previous sections to different degrees. These qualities, or as Fogel refers to them, immaterial assets, are today unequally distributed between age groups, races, genders, and rich and poor. According to Fogel (2000:205), the rich and the poor are equally focussed on sensual gratification and material pleasures and therefore equally likely to fail in self-realisation. According to Fogel's thesis (2000:179), the severe inequality in the distribution of these immaterial assets and hence the lack of those qualities needed for self-realisation amongst so many people 'results in part from changes in the structure of the economy and of social institutions through which immaterial resources are transferred'. Fogel's argument is that 'spiritual deprivation is due in part to the gratification of hedonistic impulses and instant gratification' (Fogel 2000:179). The moral crises and spiritual deprivation are caused by unfettered consumerism and hedonism that are the hallmark of our age. This is not only the greatest threat to the further progress of humanity (Fogel 2000:178) but hinders individual exploration and self-realisation that are now touchstones of the Fourth Awakening and the post-secular age. These qualities have to be spread more equally if humanity is to progress beyond the present. In other words, these qualities of character ought to be instilled in the spirit and minds of the greatest quantity of people. In the current

post-secular era, fair access to these qualities is therefore as much of a touchstone of equal prosperity and wealth generation as access to material resources used to be in the past (Fogel 2000:178). The challenge, however, is that these qualities of character are not something the state can mandate, or that the strong can bestow on the weak. Each individual can only achieve self-realisation by understanding the opportunities available in life, getting a sense of which opportunities are suited for their stage in life, showing a desire for self-education and being teachable. Furthermore, opportunities of self-realisation will remain out of touch if a person does not possess the self-esteem and discipline to overcome challenges and execute tasks with the greatest degree of excellence possible.

Though these qualities, to some degree, can be developed through the market, the best way to transfer these qualities is between individuals. However, this is neither possible without a personal embodied awakening. The human spirit will flourish only if the human mind is nourished by self-mastering the qualities of character, most befitting to the changing times. A person who has self-mastering the qualities of character would be able to explore the waves of change brought on by technology and the market more successfully. By having the right qualities of character, a person can realise individual opportunities with greater ease and success. Furthermore, by self-mastering the qualities of character, a person would develop proper judgement, that would inform and guide a person through times of uncertainty and volatility with far greater self-esteem and confidence. Such a person would also act with greater steadiness and reliability. The crux therefore is that these qualities of character have to be self-mastered, as a creative project of individual growth.

Chapter 4

The Fourth Generation

■ Introduction

Who is The Fourth Generation and why did we elect to include this generation as one of the three megatrends? These questions may be upfront on your mind, if you are not a millennial and perhaps if you are a millennial yourself, you may know the answers to these questions and not be surprised at all that your cohort is seen as a megatrend. To get onto the same page, this chapter sets out upfront the answers to these two questions and then proceeds to explicate seven core competencies or skillsets needed to converse, relate and partner with the millennials. This chapter will benefit both non-millennials as well as those who are part of this social cohort. Non-millennials will benefit firstly, by getting to know why this cohort is trending and will continue doing so until deep into the 2050s. Secondly, by getting to understand this cohorts' character traits, values, aspirations and the core competencies required to develop a millennial friendly disposition would greatly assist non-millennials to develop the right attitude(s) and qualities of character to converse, relate and partner with millennials with far greater success and in ways that

would allow them to continue to flourish in times to come. As a millennial perhaps yourself, you might gain greater insight as to why you and your peers behave in a certain way, what you truly value, your aspirations as well as perceptional positions of other generations that may constrain your own ability to flourish as a part of the social cohort. But perhaps even of greater benefit to you may be, that focussing on the core competencies that we have identified, you may correct the negative perceptional positions of other generations and learn new ways to help others to converse, relate and partner with you in ways that would allow all to thrive and prosper in the coming years.

This chapter is therefore divided into two sections. In the section 'Meeting the millennials', we attempt to answer three questions. Firstly, whether millennials, as a social cohort, are different from the other cohorts. Secondly, why we refer to this cohort as The Fourth Generation. Finally, why we consider this generation as a megatrend, that behoves us to develop a strong millennial friendly disposition and master competencies to converse, relate and partner with the generation that is beginning to set the decorum and rules of engagement and will continue doing so. The second section, 'Core competencies – Partnering for performance', is the important part of this chapter. In this section, we have identified seven core competencies or skillsets that if properly mastered, would create a thriving and flourishing engagement with The Fourth Generation, as they will be the ones who will set the touchstones that will define humanity and the path to prosperity for the years to come.

Let's start at the beginning and playfully put, Meet the millennials. As this chapters deals with millennials as a new generation of young people, we will approach our exposé through the lens of a non-millennial, which we as authors anyway are.

■ Meet the millennials

The millennial generation as a social cohort of young people were born between 1980 and the beginning of the new millennium

(Rainer & Rainer 2011:2). The millennials are, as the name gives away, the generation to take us into the new century and the new millennium. The millennials are really young men and women that are indeed very special. They were born into an economic boom and began to graduate during a major economic bust in 2008–2009. But of even greater relevance is that millennials have grown up in a time of rapid change. Millennials were raised on the Internet and they live in a world where information, social networking and opinions have become borderless and information platforms keeping facts and information fluid. New technologies, a turbulent economic climate and globalisation have caused millennials to take different perspectives, experiences, values and character qualities that are impacting on their life and work outlook. Their outlook is sharply different from the previous generations. They approach problems differently and the way the other generations perceive the millennials is influenced by these differences. For example, millennials have a new approach to ownership, which have given birth to the sharing economy. Their preference for greater flexible working hours has created the gig-economy. Being raised in a digital age, millennial's affinity to technology is also influencing how they converse, relate and do business with others. It is because of this high-tech and hyper-connected upbringing that millennials are today a disruptive-prone generation that will question the status quo and continue to search for meaning and purpose not only in what they are engaged in but also in the essence of life itself. With the consequence that they approach life and work much differently than previous generations. For example, millennials are getting married much later in life. One other significant shift in the way they approach life is that 65% of this young generation are cohabiting at least once prior to marriage, compared to just 10% in the 1960s (Rainer & Rainer 2011:3).

As a cohort, they are a richly diverse group. The millennials represent the most racial and ethnic diverse group in history. The diversity is not only about their co-workers and acquaintances but perhaps more importantly their families are diverse as well.

To the extent that one out of five millennials in the USA has at least one immigrant parent and 1 out of 10 a non-citizen parent (Rainer & Rainer 2011:81). The racial and the ethnic group of millennials defy common stereotypes (Rainer & Rainer 2011:81). What is however very insightful is that millennials are more alike than any other generation before them, mainly because of the rapid advancement in technology that let them share more experiences and build cross-ethnic and intergenerational relationships.

The millennials are now reaching majority in large numbers. They are bringing with them a faculty with cutting-edge technology, advanced communication and computing abilities and a completely different take on life and work. As they enter work life and their time of prime spending, they will come into positions of power and influence as the millennium progresses, the millennials are looking for an active role to play and make an immediate impact and to leverage their unique abilities and competencies (Jenkins 2017:22). Perhaps the focus ought not be on the verb 'looking for ….' because millennials are already impacting business, the workplace, schools, churches, world politics and the decorum that is applying to humanity today. The impact that millennials are making is just beginning. They are just too influential and too big as a cohort to ignore. They are therefore 'trending' as a generation. Companies want their business and unique skillsets; politicians want their vote; universities want their enrolment; churches, mosques and other religious institutions want their attendance; and charities want their money or otherwise contributions. Essentially this is happening because millennials have become the largest cohort in the workforce. As a cohort, they will comprise 75% of the global workforce by 2025 (Ubl & Arbit 2017:9). Secondly, in the very near future, millennials will be the core of the leadership (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:3).

As the Baby Boomers (we will clarify this term in due course) who came before the millennials have shaped so much of what is today known as the 'modern' world and culture for most of the last half of the 20th century, the millennials will be the dominant

adult population for the first half of the 21st century and during that time they will set the decorum and 'rules of engagement'. This is the new reality. For example, the average large company will lose 30% to 40% of its workforce over the next 5 to 10 years. The replacement for the Baby Boomers is and will continue to be millennial professionals (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:95).

Millennials are therefore a force to be reckoned with in the years to come. Ryan Jenkins (2017:13), author of *The Millennial Manual* offers five reasons why millennials matter. Firstly, the author emphasises the connectivity convergence that the millennials are exposed to as a complete game changer for this generation. Millennials' values, behaviours, perspectives and contributions are fundamentally different because they are constantly exposed to a large amount of information and a network of other people. It is through this connectivity that they are building social networks that influence the general present-day decorum but are also gaining knowledge and experiences that empowers millennials to value diversity, not only ethnic diversity but also diversity of thought, perceptions and belief. It is also through this connectivity that millennials are developing their talent. Secondly, millennials are gaining what Jenkins refers to as 'Topical Talent' (Jenkins 2017:13). They are developing knowledge and skills that older generations do not have. Sixty-eight per cent of hiring managers agree that this is the case. Their talent is relevant and impactful (Jenkins 2017:14). Thirdly, millennials have a fresh perspective and take on work and life. Millennials therefore are important indicators of the future and it would be prudent to understand the character, behaviours and values of millennials to predict what this would entail for market and business. Furthermore, millennials as young consumers and professionals are now entering their professional career and beginning to form their own families. They inevitably carry a high lifetime value that is quite vast. Whether we are trying to market to millennials as consumers, employing them, engaging them in business to business relationships or wish to attract their vote, there are tremendous benefits in the long-term value they carry.

Coupled to that the world is shifting and expectations and traits have shifted with it. Millennials as a social cohort has elevated expectations as a new generation. To stay in touch and ahead of the wave of change, it is best practice to understand the traits and expectations of millennials. It behoves those who desire to be relevant and impactful now and in future, at least until 2050, to acquire the competencies and skillsets to respond effectively to these elevated expectations. Perhaps you as reader may wonder why our line of inference is that millennials will remain relevant and impactful until the 2050s. The simple reason is that millennials on average are now 30 years of age and will remain a dominant force until they reach their sixties, which takes us to the 2050s.

What is perhaps for now most important is to ask ourselves what we are going to do, as non-millennials to converse, relate and partner better with them and how we are going to unleash their creativity. Millennials ought to ask themselves what they are going to do to overcome the prejudices and perceived conditions of other generations, so that they may be the best they can be. Millennials differ from other generations in terms of their attitudes, values and beliefs, and we have a choice to either vilify them, tolerate them or we can engage them and benefit from the contributions they will be making through innovations and their new perspectives. Your own future and the future of your organisations, whether it is a business, university, religious institution or whatever other association that you are involved in, depend on the ability to adapt and work with millennials.

Before it is perceived that this line of inference implies that it is only non-millennials that are the ones to adapt, accept our assurance this is not the case. The changes should not be just for the sake of the millennials but to take an organisation into the 21st century. All that we argue for, and this will become more evident in this chapter, is that an analysis of millennials as a social cohort offers the appropriate data points to project how this new generation will influence the future decorum and

'rules of engagement'. By connecting the dots and with that we imply the unique traits, values, aspirations and perspectives of millennials, with the core competencies required to converse, relate and partner with them, we will remain future proof and continue to thrive and flourish. To be therefore effective and successful in future, it is important to study the trends that millennials are creating and be rewarded with important indicators of the changing times so that we and our organisations could adjust timeously and acquire the necessary competencies or skillset to enjoy success.

But perhaps, we are getting ahead of ourselves. The question that perhaps should be considered first is whether we are not all just the same. Secondly, whether generations differ across the world. Thirdly, why we refer to millennials as *The Fourth Generation,* and finally why it behoves us to study millennials.

Well, let's answer the first question.

Sceptics may indeed ask if millennials are not the same as every other generation. If so, why should we give special attention to them? The line of argument by sceptics may be that millennials like other generations are doing the very same things as when they were young, inter alia, challenge the status quo; push the envelope; engage in an experimental lifestyle; and have the belief that all marriages last forever. To answer this very valid question, we ought to briefly consider and reflect upon four related theories that each explain parts of the question. These theories explain how major value-shaping influences impact upon generations. The value-shaping influences that affect the different generations as they move through their formative years are inter alia, family, education, morality, peers, spirituality, ethics and culture (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:13). These 'factors' influence inter alia, the ethics or value systems, the respective worldview and their aspirations in life. For instance, the Baby Boomers, as will be more evident later on, as a social cohort live to work and Generation X strives for a work–life balance, whilst millennials simply work to live. It is not uncommon for millennials to work for

a year and then take a sabbatical and hike the Himalayas or have a goal to visit 30 countries before the person turns 30. Millennials do not have a 'bucket list' at least not for now. Millennials are not wired to wait for retirement. Another example is how generations handle authority. Baby Boomers regard authority and hierarchy as important. For millennials authority and in particular hierarchy is not a major issue. The reasons are multi-fold. Millennials prefer flexibility; are informal in their approach and style; do not care what your title is and are used to communicating or at least have the opportunity to convey their message directly to the highest authority, even if it is the President of the United States. Boomers think of salaries and rewards as something they have to earn through hard work. Millennials are not against hard work, but believe it is possible to work smarter, not harder. Getting the point? With these few examples in mind, let's briefly reflect on the four theories, each touching on some aspects that give rise to the differentiation and the formation of social cohorts or generations. We do not want to belabour the differentiation too much, as in some sense, we are the same because we follow a certain cognitive development pattern. However, the differentiation is indicative that the future could indeed look different than the past because of these differentiations. These theories are well articulated in the works of Espinoza and Ukleja with the title *Managing the Millennials* (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:18–23).

The *Maturation Theory* explains how a person's behaviour and attitude develop. The maturation theory propounds that people change; mature and develop their values, attitudes, perspectives and preferences as they age. As visual activity, such as crawling, walking and speaking are all the normative results of growing up or aging, so are attitudes and values. According to this theory, we all have expectations with respect to events like a child taking his or her first steps, uttering his or her first word, et cetera. In this way, certain attitudes or behaviours should be generally observable at a certain age. In this sense, generally speaking, all capable and cognitive persons develop according to a normative

sequence and in that sense, we are all relatively the same. It is therefore true that all generations show characteristics of youth. But according to the *Generational Theory*, values and attitudes about work and life for instance depend on so much more. Values and attitudes according to the theory are not merely a result of aging or maturing. Culture is also at play. German sociologist, Karl Mannheim (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:20), who established the generational theory, argues that each generation or social cohort has a set of values, attitudes and beliefs that inform their character and for this reason is considered a social cohort in the first place. Mannheim held the belief that a person's generation greatly influences his or her thoughts, feelings and even behaviour.

The *Life Course Theory* as a multidisciplinary theory complements the *Generational Theory*. In this theory, demographers, historians, developmental psychologists and sociologists, look to a cohort's efforts. The theory proposes that people who experience a sociological context when they are more or less at the same age, tend to develop a mindset or take a perspective that remains with them for their entire lives. The cohorts for instance have been greatly affected by historical events such as the Great Depression, World War II, the Beatles, and the fall of Apartheid and the Berlin Wall. All these historical and social events are markers that frame life experiences and shape the values, beliefs and attitudes. These events create memories of a shared past, collective memories, memories retained by members of a group, large or small, who experienced it. The *Group and Age Norm Theory* advances the notion that cohorts or a specific group of people experience a shared form of sense-making and establish a decorum of what is deemed appropriate and fit for the particular circumstances at the time. During this process, individuals have a shared interpretation of their environment and they create collective accounts or narratives to which they assign meaning. It elevates individual perceptions and feelings to group knowledge. These four theories jointly are suggestive that though humans are to some extent the same in terms of certain cognitive development, they develop

unique collective accounts or group narratives from which each cohort derives certain meaning and a value system. This will be further expounded when we describe the cohort we called The Fourth Generation.

This brings us to the next question and that is whether generations differ across the world. This question is particularly relevant in the case of The Fourth Generation. As generations mature and move through the various life cycles, the moods of their society and historical or social events have some impact on them. For instance, Baby Boomers were born post-World War II and with the emergence of consumerism, a time with a high social mood and in which expansion, growth and high consumption were prevalent. This provided Baby Boomers with untold economic opportunities mainly because of the hard work and commitment from the previous generations, 'The Builders'. Whichever way, Baby Boomers mainly in the western civilisation enjoyed a heightened sense of confidence and self-esteem. However, in other parts of the world like for instance in Japan, the post-World War II times were not of a high social mood. It is therefore imperative that in order to relate to generations internationally, we have to take cognisance of the unique circumstances, social moods and cycles that each generation experience with the aim of establishing any form of differentiation. However, millennials are the first generation to collapse the locational divides between generations (Jenkins 2017:5). The main reason for this is that millennials communicate with their peers around the world visually, audibly and/or in person. The result of this is that millennials' character traits, values, perspectives and expectations are very much similar across the world.

With the aforesaid in mind, the thesis followed in this chapter is that millennials could be defined as a specific generation or a social cohort of people with great similarities in character traits, values, attitudes, perspectives and aspirations. Very specific core competencies are required to effectively and successfully

converse, relate and partner with this cohort. At least this is what this chapter sets out to do. But before we proceed, we need to reflect on two further questions essential to this endeavour. Firstly, why we refer to them as *The Fourth Generation* and secondly why it behoves us to learn as much about the millennials as we can.

First things first. Millennials are referred to as *The Fourth Generation* with the so-called *Builders, Baby Boomers* and *Generation X,* the preceding generations as cohorts of people specific to certain time periods. As eluded earlier on, generations are regarded as social cohorts of people who were born within a particular date range that share similar social, cultural or political experiences, and have been shaped by specific events or social trends, whilst coming off age. Though the differentiations between generations may not be considered as a scientific inference, there is generally speaking some consensus about the specific time period and cohort qualities. These four generations may therefore be described as follows. *The Builders* as a social cohort were born between 1925 and 1945, the end of World War II. The Great Depression and World War II had an ineradicable effect on the members of this generation. People of this generation saw work as central and spent 30 years or more in a career before retiring, getting their golden watch. They commonly spent their entire careers at one employer. The *Baby Boomers* as the next generation were born from 1946 to 1964. This generation was influenced by the Vietnam and the Cold War, the introduction of television, rock and roll music and consumerism. The *Baby Boomers* protested in favour of equality of conditions for everybody. Being the generation that enjoyed an economic boom after the 1930s recession, this generation discovered the charms of credit cards and under the influence of consumer sovereignty drove their *Builders* parents crazy with their spending habits. *The Builders* parents learned from the depression not to buy on credit, something the *Baby Boomers* used to support their shopaholic attitude. *Baby Boomers* hold values such as professional ability, health and wellness and material prosperity

high. Boomers are forever young – run fast, jump long and throw hard (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:6).

Then came another group – *Generation X. Generation X* are those born from 1965 to 1979. *Generation X* experienced more recent events. The Persian Gulf War, AIDS, and corporate downsizing greatly affected them. They also lived in homes where the divorce rate had tripled and had both parents working, they were entertained by video games and computers. All made their mark on this generation (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:6). This made values such as mobility and autonomy important to this generation. This is a generation that values independence and a balance in their lives. Technology came of age and the members of this generation used it to bring about greater balance between work and life. This is also the generation who began to demand flexible work scheduling and working from home. This is a generation who could sit on the beach and have a teleconference.

Then came *The Fourth Generation* – the millennials. Demographers place their birth years between 1980 and 2000. They have been shaped by events such as 9/11 and terrorism, environmentalism, cell phones, text messaging, technology-based social networking, a strong emphasis on meaningfulness and a purposeful life as well as embracing diversity. For the millennials, technology is not a tool to just work smarter but to achieve greater harmony between work and life. Technology is an integral part of this cohort and touches about every aspect of their existence. The members of this cohort were told by their Baby Boomer parents that they can achieve whatever they want. They were also taught at school that there is no 'I' in the word *team* and collaborative relations are the golden key. They are a generation that unlike their Baby Boomers parents who only tolerated diversity, embraces diversity whether ethnic diversity or diversity of thought. When they get in the workplace, they expect collaborative teamwork and if diversity is not embraced, they considered it as weird. For this cohort, it is a lifestyle. If they cannot visit temples in Thailand, they 'visit' the temples on the Internet. They Skype with friends and business partners across

the globe. Because of technology the world is a much smaller place. In fact, this generation's values, perspectives and aspirations are no longer limited by geography – technology is the new context for shaping this *Fourth Generation*.

This brings us to the second question, namely why the millennials ought to be regarded as a major influence and megatrend. Firstly, millennials are the signposts of change (Jenkins 2017:xvii). How we live, work and relate to one another today is changing fast – faster than ever before. Millennials as the largest social cohort that are in the prime of their lifecycle, are a big contributor to this acceleration and change. In the more modern vernacular what this means is that millennials are 'trending'. So, learning how to converse, relate and partner with millennials will positively position you and if applicable, your organisation in tomorrow's in-flux environment. Another reason that may be considered in response to the initial question is, who gets to do sense-making in this in-flux environment (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:24). Which generation or cohort is more apt to use the term 'decorum'. 'Decorum' in this context is defined as good manners or behaviour and in a more practical form, what is most befitting for the circumstances. As each cohort has specific expectations, perspectives and sanctions to punish any disregard or violation of expectations and perspectives, or reward good manners, the question is, 'who set the rules of engagement'. It can be argued that the larger the cohort, the greater the influence and position of power, and the greater the control over the norms and standards for the time. Millennials have already outnumbered both the Baby Boomers and the Generation X in the work and marketplace. Soon millennials will control positions of power and therefore, it seems more likely that they will have a great influence and be able to set the tone of the decorum and the rules of engagement. The line of inference that is therefore followed in this chapter is that millennials are indeed, or very soon will be, setting the decorum and the rules of engagement and it is time to gear up and develop new competencies consistent with the changing times. It is befitting that you should take cognisance of

and work towards realising the expectations and perspectives of this cohort. With that we do not imply that you should 'become like them', but rather adapt to the changing times and pursue what is deemed befitting and lead and work like it is the present day. American author, Eric Hoffer (cited in Jenkins 2017) said it best when he wrote:

> In time of change, learners inherit the earth, whilst the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists. (p. vii)

In other words, to inherit the future would require that you ought to develop new perspectives, expectations and competencies befitting for the time without forgoing who you are and your own expectations and values. Tim Elmore (2015), the founder and president of Growing Leaders, has a refreshing perspective on this. Elmore uses the analogy of a 'pioneer' to explain what he thinks is needed. We should leave the familiar and venture into an unknown culture and learn the language and customs so that our message can reach the people. By doing so, the pioneer remains relevant and respectful in pursuance of his or her personal quest. What in fact is needed is to embrace a missionary approach. This entails a process of learning and then earning the right to lead and the right to be recognised as relevant and impactful (Jenkins 2017:42). This means that we have to first study the culture and learn the values, perspectives and expectations of the ruling cohort, the millennials, so that we may add value to the future. It therefore behoves us to learn as much about the millennials as we can at this stage and acquire a deeper understanding of the psyche of these young and dynamic cohort (Rainer & Rainer 2011:255). Such is the purpose of this chapter.

There is indeed a Holy Grail that will unlock the new cohorts. Generational researchers confirm this. But the 'secret' to unlock the way we ought to converse, relate and partner with millennials is not a secret at all. It simply takes an understanding of who the millennials are, where they come from, and what motivates and incites them. This means that we have to master certain skillsets

to act in a certain manner under the given circumstances that are unfolding. This chapter will therefore delve into the core competencies required to converse, relate and partner with millennials. But as trends provide the lens through which we could appreciate the future, the correct perceptional position ought to be followed in order to 'see' the unfolding trends through different lenses and to progress from each lens to understand and create new choices and pathways. Failure to do so can seriously inhibit our own effectiveness and relevance in the changing conditions. Let's look at some of these perceptional positions. The first perceptional position requires very little effort and cognitivity as it comes naturally to all of us, namely seeing, hearing and feeling through our own eyes, ears and emotions. Our reaction to and interpretation of things usually centres on what is important to us and what we would like to achieve (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:37). The second perceptional position described by Espinoza and Ukleja (2016:38) requires you to 'walk a mile in another person's shoes'. You have probably heard the saying that to really understand where another person is coming from, you have to experience things as they would. This involves seeing, hearing and feeling a situation as if you were them. Rather than responding to a situation or coming to preconceived conclusions based on how things seem to you, you need to think in terms of how the same situation looks and feels to the other person involved. Granted, it may be presumptuous to think what someone else may have experienced or what that person's own perception or prejudices may be. The third and last perceptional position is that of an outside observer, someone who is detached from the emotional element of the situation or event. This perspective can be challenging and be very uncomfortable because it requires a solely objective view. When you try to see a situation from 'outside' looking in, you think in terms of what observations a third party would make; what advice they would give and what opinions they may develop based on what they see. Contrary to what it sounds, this way is the best way. When you gain the ability to see things objectively, you begin to look

for different ways to respond to things, find it easier to learn and adopt, and remove prejudices, resulting in a more positive and desirable outcome and a greater personal experience and satisfaction.

But the reality is that we sometimes just live our life and see the world from a singular lens, from only one of these three perspectives. We more often than not, fail to expand our vision to include the other perceptional positions. Someone who, for whatever reason, lives life in only the first position, focusses on their own needs, perspectives, expectations and circumstances, rather than considering those of others. Those who lives life in the second, sacrifice their own needs, perspectives and expectations to accommodate those of other people. This often is referred to as being co-dependent enabling or simply be a doormat. A person stuck in the third position may become a disinterested, indifferent and detached observer of life (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:38). So, it is not a matter of one or the other. All three perceptional positions are befitting depending on the circumstances and our level of cognitivity and ability. Cognitive and capable persons ought to work through each perception regularly. In fact, success at work and in life generally depends on the ability to do just that.

Whichever perceptional position is taken, it is most productive and useful to look at trends, unfolding events and changing conditions from a point other than your own. Essentially, learning to see things in a new way. As we will be dealing in this chapter with the character traits, perspectives, expectations and values of the millennial cohort, it may be most useful and productive to suspend personal bias and prejudices and like a missionary or pioneer try to consider the unfolding trends from an impartial observer or 'third person' perceptional position. This may prove most rewarding, as new competencies that could greatly advance personal as well as organisational efficiencies, relevance and competitiveness, in a very in-flux environment, may be discovered.

There are two caveats to the analysis to follow. In 2015 alone, approximately 44 000 articles featuring millennials have graced the newsstands (Ubl & Arbit 2017:9). We therefore readily admit that any attempt to describe their character traits, cognitive patterns, values and expectations with the purpose of elucidating those core competencies needed to converge, relate and partner with millennials, will never satisfactorily represent this very special cohort. However, there are some common themes emerging. We have therefore limited the scope and content of this chapter to only seven core competencies. In both instances, the criteria that we have employed in selecting the seven core competencies are what we have deemed most noticeable and relevant. First, in terms of the millennials as cohorts and secondly, with the insight of the unfolding conditions of the two preceding trends that we have examined in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. The reason being that these three trends are converging and the core competencies to be self-mastered in order to thrive and flourish under the unfolding conditions, are very much related and share a great commonality. Thirdly we have not included any so-called 'Threshold competencies', that is competencies of a technical nature. We have limited the scope and context to those competencies that may have an impact on the value aspects of human character, behaviour and attitude, and as such demand a shift or renewal in the character ethics of a person.

The second caveat is less intricate. The core competencies that we have elucidated in the section 'Core competencies – Partnering for performance' ought to be personally mastered, though the benefit of success can be both personal or institutional. Secondly, as alluded to before, this chapter may be useful for both millennials and non-millennials alike. As both authors are non-millennials and given the personal nature of the core competencies, the remainder of the chapter is written from a non-millennials/personal perspective. In other words, when referring to 'you' in the text, the term refers to non-millennials. Likewise, when 'you' stand to be richly rewarded with greater

competitiveness in mastering the recommended core competencies skillsets, the reference also incorporates *institutions*. Because, after all, any institution whether a business, government, church, mosque or social society consist of people in the first instance and only a person(s) can bring about change in an institutional context. With that in mind, let's move on to explicate those core competencies needed to converse, relate and partner with millennials.

■ Core competencies – Partnering for performance

We have belaboured the point before, but let's reiterate that millennials will set the decorum and rules of engagement as a social cohort until deep into the 2050s. This means that we have to master new competencies if we wish to converse, relate and partner with millennials, as their take on life, what they value, and how they do things, will certainly be different. We therefore have to master new competencies in order to significantly increase personal and organisational performance capabilities so that we may achieve continued prosperity and succeed to flourish in the years to come. This then is the mission of this section to identify those core competencies.

Let's then proceed.

From the outset, we have to admit that much more can be said and even more need to be researched to come to the full complexity of the knowledge associated with the issues that will be touched upon. We regrettably have to be brief and succinct. We have therefore only identified those so-called 'non-threshold' *competencies* or competencies that are not of a technical nature, but rather those that would inform and shape human character and human attitudes. In this limited sense, we have identified seven core competencies that would bring to bear changes in the character ethics of mainly the non-millennials. However, these competencies if duly mastered could also refine and/or transform

the character ethics of millennials that wish to converse, relate and partner with greater success and efficiency with members of the other cohorts.

The seven competencies are:

1. Build collaborative relationships
2. Be adaptative and favour flexibility
3. Be authentic and create unique experiences
4. Respect and expect diversity
5. Promote purpose and meaning
6. Put imagination to work and encourage creativity
7. Commit to collaborative communication.

■ Competency #1: Build collaborative relationships

Teaming and collaborative engagement are mission critical for any person or organisation that wishes to be successful in this age. In fact, the Jenkins (2017:240) study has found that three quarters of employees regarded teamwork and collaboration as 'very important' and 97% of employees and executives stated that ill aligned teams have worse outcomes on tasks and projects. It is therefore befitting to start with this essential core competency. Different generations have different ideas about what teamwork and collaboration should look like. It might not always be feasible to work across generations when creating connections and collaborations. However, neglecting to build collaborative relationships can leave the team and organisation vulnerable, in particular when millennials are involved (Jenkins 2017:240). The millennials grew up in the era of group projects discussions and their formative years were spent with families with a much more democratic approach to solving problems and relating to one another. These and many other factors have to a large extent developed a unique team play disposition amongst the millennials (Ubl & Arbit 2017:365). Today, millennials want to collaborate and communicate with peers as well as leadership in a collaborative

manner. This means that all millennials are good at encouraging all views and opinions, and often find unique ways to build consensus amongst their peers (Ubl & Arbit 2017:365). Collaborative relationships are therefore important for millennials and provide the foundation upon which opportunities evolve to develop the trust and rapport required to lead in a collaborative-democratic way. As millennials continue to take on more leadership roles and position of power, do not expect this team mentality to change or evaporate (Ubl & Arbit 2017:365).

Building good collaborative relationships will therefore be very befitting to develop a millennial friendly disposition. Besides, the good news is that doing so will pay handsome dividends. Tom Rath (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:95) in his book *Vital Friends* gives a startling statistic. According to him, employees with a good relationship with their managers are more than 2.5 times more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. In the Gallup Study (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:95), 8 million people responded in the affirmative to the statement: 'my superior or someone at work seems to care about me as a person'. The people who agreed with the statement are very likely to have higher levels of trust and loyalty and stay with the organisation, engage better with customers and are more productive. A study by Saratogo Institute (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:95) found that the quality of relationships a worker has with her or his immediate supervisor accounts for 50% of job satisfaction. A further competitive advantage of maintaining good collaborative relationships is that the transfer of tacit knowledge happens with greater ease and efficacy. When we consider the emergence of the knowledge economy, the inability to transfer information presents a serious threat to the continued effective operation of any organisation. Tacit knowledge can only be transferred through relationships. The better the collaboration, the higher the level of knowledge transfer. If the inexperienced young people and the experienced cadre feel disconnected, chances are that tacit knowledge will not be retained in the organisation (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:95). Many more practical examples may be highlighted in support of

the inference that collaborative relationships may be the most important core competency to be acquired in order to build a millennials friendly disposition. For the purpose of this discussion, what is most important is that we ought to have the ability and aptitude that could build and maintain collaborative relationships. We will find some good ideas and insight in how to be partnering and teaming with millennials in the following core competencies that will now be briefly discussed. For the sake of brevity, we will identify and briefly describe 19 core competencies under four headings that may be of great assistance in building collaborative relationships with millennials.

☐ Balancing of goals and work next to them

There has been an emphasis over the past 20 years or so on the importance of creating narrative statements, such as mission, vision and values. These narratives have become the boundaries for character and conduct. The Espinoza study (2016:142) has found that this has shifted. The narrative today is that so long as individuals are moving in favour of the overarching mission, vision and values, one ought to remain open to adapt to the uniqueness of the people that we work, live and relate to. The focus ought to shift beyond what we each want, to what the overarching needs of all of us whether as a cohort, group, society or organisation. The focus therefore has to be the balancing of the goals of all those involved, being the millennials, the employer, you or the organisations you are involved in. The new narrative ought to be focussing on the overarching goals, the competencies required, the operational habits to be developed, and the virtues that ought to be mastered to execute the vision with greater regularity and steadiness. This would in turn require proximity. In order to balance the diverse goals and to engage with millennials, it is vital to work next to them. It requires a general relaxation between engaging parties and to get closer to one another. With relaxation we mean something more than informality, but rather a closeness, togetherness and synergy. Practically speaking, proximity

advances networking and a much flatter structure of organising where the 'boss-card' is not played, unless absolutely necessary. It also entails an attitude that shifts the focus from 'perform for me to let's partner for performance' (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:141). This is one of the reasons why millennials prefer the network model over the old traditional hierarchical organisation structure that assigns special roles and significance to one employee over another. To encourage engagement and partnering in a network model, the best practice is to stay curious about the other person. It is no secret that millennials are used to the attention. They are not shy when it comes to talking about themselves, their ideas, their talent or aspirations. Therefore, the best advice would be to stay curious about them. Margret Wheatly (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:89) in her book '*Turning to One Another*' emphasises and encourages people to have conversations that are important to them and the people they care about. Wheatly (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:89) says: 'Stay curious about each other'. When people have this humility at the start of a conversation, they are more interested in all the other parties. People share their story and their dreams and fears more readily if they feel that the other party/parties have a genuine curiosity. Such an attitude of curiosity helps us remove our own masks and open ourselves up. It creates a spaciousness that is rare in other interactions. Curiosity is indeed a great help to start and build good collaborative conversations. But what if the person becomes self-absorbed? Building a relationship, first them, then you, is a very effective way to overcome the perceived orientation that millennials are self-absorbed. If you wish to engage with millennials in a collaborative manner, it will have to be through relationships that provide positive attention and affirmation. The best practice is to shift the focus from yourself and your experiences to that of the other person. Sometimes it is indeed advantageous to get to know the other person better in order to relate better. But there are some caveats that ought to be considered. Though you have to rethink some of the 'rules of engagement' and put them first, it does not mean that in your

effort to get to know them better and like them more, you do not have to be like them. See it rather this way. To engage more naturally and effectively would require of you to show greater empathy. Showing empathy means sensing another person's feelings and perspectives, and being actively interested in the person's concerns as a result (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:89). This way, empathy is a virtue that enables you to get closer, be more curious and work towards growing together through the balancing of goals.

☐ Grow them, but play to your own competency

Having the virtue of empathy enables and empowers in ways that you begin to desire and aspire to see others succeed. The focus on seeing others succeed and prosper can be personally rewarding. It is indeed energising to see millennials grow and be able to share their excitement when improving and moving from the baseline. Likewise, by focussing on the other persons' growth and prosperity, one gains their collaboration and opens up connection. One mistake that is often made whilst attempting to engage with millennials and help them grow, is to try to be like them by conforming to the way they talk or dress or trying to like their music. Remember millennials, like many other cohorts, place a very high value on authenticity and sincerity. Millennials expect authentic conduct and diverse character traits. In fact, for them diversity is so expected that it is just a matter of fact. They do not expect anyone to be like them in dress, language or taste. What they want is for you to like them, not to be like them. We therefore are not suggesting that you become 'BFFs', that means best friends forever. But simply connecting with millennials by taking an interest in them, see them grow and be your best self. This, admittingly, is a fine line. Being liked and be respected are not the same. But what is clear is that each has to play to their own competencies. We cannot emphasise that enough. You have to use the competencies where you are already strong and build up your strength in other areas. But, what if you feel run over? The

Espinoza study (2016:94) advised that when you do feel run over, or feel taken advantage of, shift the focus to directing them by setting boundaries for behaviour and broadening their perspectives by letting them understand how their behaviour impacts the entire system, including those who feel done in. But it also requires that you do not take things personally. Self-differentiation is a competency that we will discuss later on in greater depth, but essentially it means that you ought not take behaviour personally but differentiate between what is personal and what relates to the circumstances. This is a very useful competency because strong self-differentiated people are most capable of recognising the successes of others. This is very important because if you are desirous to see millennials prosper and flourish, recognition is very important.

Rodney Mason, Group Vice-President of Marketing with Blackhawk Engagement Solutions (Blackhawk 2015), an international incentives and engagement company, says the following:

> Millennials are accustomed to attention and praise from their earliest day and expect regular affirmation. They are prepared to switch jobs earlier and more frequently than previous generations so particular steps to maintain millennial engagement is required. (p. 2)

According to Blackhawk's research findings of 2015 (Jenkins 2017:121), millennials want positive feedback and rewards when they exceed their own personal performance levels, followed by promotions and only then rewards for exceeding team performance levels. Incentives and recognition are therefore important to millennial relations. To be effective, incentives ought to be involved in recognising the reward expectations of millennials. This means that rewards and other forms of recognition should fit with millennial values (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:67). Recognising programmes done right, can have powerful impact on relations, as well as performance. Recognising millennials boosts trust, engagement, retention, increased productivity and satisfaction at a deeper psychological level

(Jenkins 2017:120). According to Glassdoor.com (Glassdoor 2013), more than 80% of employers with a millennial workforce say that millennials respond to appreciation and recognition of their work by being motivated to work harder and staying at their jobs longer. Recognition has indeed a positive impact on relations that in turn has a significant impact upon engagement and retention. These research findings are supported by Bersin by Deloitte (Jenkins 2017:120) who found that the top 20% of companies when measured according to how much they build a recognition-rich culture, had a 31% lower voluntary turnover rate. Organisations with reward programmes in place had a 14% improvement in engagement and productivity. The overall verdict therefore is to take a 'celebrate then deliberate' approach with millennials in building collaborative relationships and to grow them. Millennials are likely to become disengaged in the relationship if their wins are not celebrated. They will stop growing and be more likely to leave the organisation (Ubl & Arbit 2017:170). It is therefore vital for relationship building, partnering and enhanced performance that we look for opportunities to recognise and celebrate efforts of the millennials (Ubl & Arbit 2017:386). Here are a few pointers to consider when recognising and inciting performance and good conduct: (1) recognise specific behaviour and results, (2) recognise values, (3) recognise with personalisation, (4) recognise in every direction, including peer recognition, (5) recognise visibly and widely, (6) recognise in real time, (7) recognise people, not technology and (8) recognise the coach and giving a good old-fashioned *Thank You!! Job Well Done!!* remain the most cost-effective way to recognise and incite performance and good conduct.

☐ Satisfy the pinnacle human need of self-realisation

Is using compensation to recognise millennials and building collaborative relationships effective? The answer is Yes! Compensation is associated with the need for safety in Maslow's

hierarchy, but it is not the most important thing for millennials. The Jenkins study (2017:122) argues that millennials are not motivated in their work relationships by compensation beyond the threshold of their daily needs with respect to their lifestyle. For millennials, compensation merely meets their basic needs, whilst intrinsic motivations meet deeper needs. Is promotion as a tool to recognise millennials and building better relations effective? The Jenkins study (2017:122) found the answer to be affirmative. Yes, promotion as part of a career advancement programme is encouraging for relationship building. But the pinnacle human need of self-realisation, that means to be virtuous and exceeding in challenges, opportunities, learning, creativity etc. are better ways to promote strong collaborative relationships and encouraging effective partnering and advanced performance. When it comes to self-realisation as a means to advance collaborative relationships, you have to be mindful that millennials, like exposure to others, like being given the chance to showcase their knowledge and even making a contribution to mentoring others. These elements are vital for their self-realisation and also facilitating collaboration. Let's briefly touch on these aspects.

Millennials have no qualms about taking their concerns straight to the top, even if that happens to be the President of the United States of America. They perceive having direct access to leaders as perfectly natural. Therefore, do not mistake this conduct of millennials for narcissism or entitlement. Millennials were simply raised that way. When it comes to networking, millennials have never known any other way. Giving them exposure to other people across the organisation is therefore an ideal way of building relationships and building collaboration. It shows them that they are cared for and valued. This may also help them to develop new perspectives and connect the dots and may see how they fit in and that they are more than a cog in the corporate wheel (Ubl & Arbit 2017:356).

This is an ideal opportunity to allow them to showcase their knowledge, but also to coach them that they can learn from others. They have to receive a clear message that every person

has a lesson to offer and a lesson to learn. Both formal and informal settings where people can share their expertise in a specific area is very useful for promoting collaborative relations. The collective sharing of knowledge, experience and passion that surrounds millennials will not only alert them to the 'wealth of knowledge' (Jenkins 2017), expertise and passion, it also teaches them how and when they should approach others for help or collaboration on a project. It also shows millennials where they could improve their knowledge, where they should gain more experience, and how they ought to raise their level of passion and commitment. This is particularly useful for establishing cross-generational relations and the need for 'generational training' (Jenkins 2017). Such training offers information on who belongs to which generation, what motivates each group and how to work with each group. Such an exercise can grease the wheels of generational collaboration. Generational training helps generations to develop awareness and appreciate each other. They develop empathy and find common ground in their similarities and differences. The winner is 'collaboration'! (Jenkins 2017:241).

It is also a useful opportunity to promote shared interest and the need for affinity groups. The purpose and the value of building collaborative relationships are to bring together shared interest, common goals, shared values and greater harmony amongst diverse thought patterns, opinions and perspectives. Launching of affinity groups to pursue a shared interest and common goal ought to be considered because affinity groups not only advance cross-generational contact but also diminishes misconceptions.

☐ Reduce the hoops and promote distributed leadership

The traditional organisational pyramid model provided a valuable basis for law, order and structure in the world. At the top stood the responsible authority, with decisions trickling down to lower ranks. This created a clear map for accountability and

responsibility, and every person had a position and rank in the organisation. The traditional model may still be very useful in some organisations but generally speaking the model is no longer standing the test of time. Millennials are known for their proclivity to disrupt and the traditional hierarchical structure does not work for them. They feel like circus animals jumping through hoops (Ubl & Arbit 2017:133). The general perception amongst millennials is that this structure creates barriers on the road to innovation, change and collaboration. It is a model that many feel rather than doing good, actually hampers creativity, sharing of ideas and place restrictive boundaries on collaborative relationships that are needed to be innovative, creative and disruptive. As millennials continue to make up a bigger and bigger segment of the employees and leadership corps, a shift from the traditional hierarchical structure to a more networked and interwoven model is developing. The transition from the hierarchical to the networking organisational structure that is taking place, is changing the top down, command control world that has been the touchstone for organisational cooperation for a long time. Millennials today are therefore embracing and in fact expecting a more networked, flatter world. Today, a much stronger belief in what is termed as 'distributed leadership' is evolving (Ubl & Arbit 2017:124). International recognised organisations are also going the way of 'the flatter the better' (Ubl & Arbit 2017:124). The focus is therefore shifting to a more self-management that ditches titles, managers and hierarchical form of communication that is linear. Because millennials and even Generation X are leaning towards the network model that they experience to be more fluid, efficient and devoid of silos, the focus is shifting to collaborative relationships and the new touchstones of effective organisation are not structured in nature, but rather related to character, competencies and virtues. To facilitate collaborative relationships the changing nature of the organisational chart should therefore be embraced. This implies greater emphasis on self-management, accountability and self-realisation underscored by virtuous character, values conducive to self-command, and all the essential competencies for the achievement of self-realisation.

It also requires constant check in, for instance during a project. Furthermore, real-time feedback is vital to the establishment and strengthening of collaborative relations. More about this is given in the section on collaborative communication.

What remains vital is to reduce the hoops, promote a flatter-network-based structure and keep contact at all levels in one's peripheral vision in order to build collaborative relations. Smart people, therefore, appreciate that millennials are a collaborative bunch and stay networked and in touch. They remain focussed on continued networking in order to stay in the loop and to ensure that they stay in touch, updated and relevant. Given this context, it is vital to follow the few pointers aforesaid and develop the competencies required. The reward is real. Building collaborative relationships facilitate partnering with millennials and advances performance.

■ Competency #2: Be adaptive and favour flexibility

The recent Jenkins study (2017:83) established that 71% of American adults think that millennials are 'selfish' and 65% think that millennials are 'entitled'. Entitlement has been defined in the study as a feeling or belief that 'I deserve to be given something such as special privileges'. Confronting entitlement is indeed quite a daunting task; therefore, a vital competency required in order to partner with millennials is to deal with entitlement in an effective and fair way. If entitlement is a major hindrance or even a disease that weakens collaborative relations and building a millennials friendly disposition, Townsend (2017) says that 'the antidote is the habit of doing what is best, rather than doing what is comfortable to achieve a worthwhile outcome'. As will be clearer from the analyses to follow, this antidote requires that we suspend personal biases and remain adaptive and favour flexibility in order to be able to do what is best. The Espinoza study (2016:60) refers to this disposition of flexibility and adaptability as 'flexing'. Flexing, or being adaptive and flexible, involves one

party demonstrating a good faith effort to address the real-time expectations of the other. Flexing is accordingly, a dynamic for an ongoing dialogue and continued search for uncovering and harmonising expectations. The focus in flexing is, how we can do our best working together (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:63). Willingness to be flexible gives millennials as the 'other party' so to speak, agency with respect to what happens to them in real life circumstance. However, some argue that this kind of flexibility leaves one open to manipulation and abuse as the millennial's doormat. We disagree. Having no boundaries and being a pushover for the demands of others, is not what 'flexing' is about. Flexing is not giving into whatever others want to do. No, flexing is about creating an environment in which parties can relate, converse and partner in a collaborative manner. In this sense, flexing is about being fair. Trying to understand what others are experiencing and how matters affect them (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:61).

As already eluded above, confronting entitlement by applying flexing can be quite a daunting task. But there are some core competencies that, when duly mastered, could greatly assist us in changing entitlement and selfish conduct into greater collaboration and a joined effort to work towards mutually beneficial outcomes. What now follows is a brief overview of those core competencies or most befitting capacities that are suitable to the challenges. These seven core competencies are worth mastering in order to be able to 'flex' and be adaptive when needed in order to create an ongoing dialogue, uncovering and harmonising expectations, and advance performance. By so doing, we would change entitlement and selfish conduct into greater collaborative engagement(s).

☐ Seeking agreement and reinforcing responsibilities

Russle B. Lemle from the University of California (Jenkins 2017: 183) writes: 'Entitlement are unilateral. We award them to ourselves.

By contrast, agreements are jointly consented, arrived at together'. Accordingly, Lemle asserts that relationships 'flourish when both parties feel they have a voice in decisions'. Lemle further explains (Jenkins 2017:184) that wanting our way, is not the same as being entitled to our way. Even if we feel strongly about how something should be done, other involved parties should also have a voice. If we simply force our position, argues Lemle, we infringe on the autonomy of the other party by denying their legitimacy. The best practice to contain entitlement is therefore to respect the right of millennials to an equal input and to seek their agreement. The counter side is to reinforce responsibilities. This means shifting the focus from 'I desire' to 'I am responsible for'. Paradoxically, an 'I deserve' mindset disempowers because it puts the person at the mercy of external forces, outside of their control. Townsend argues that on the other hand, an attitude of 'I am responsible for' is extremely empowering because it gives control or ownership to the individual. In fact, in every 'I am responsible for' scenario, the individual is empowered with choice and control (Jenkins 2017:185). This is something that millennials are familiar with and longing for. It is therefore a befitting aptitude to deal with the challenges of entitlement, to challenge millennials to do more, rather than saying, 'let me take it off your plate'. Challenge them to stretch themselves beyond what they initially might think of doing. Millennials will arise to the challenge. Giving millennials added responsibilities and pushing them to even greater performance can be an unexpected way to contain entitlement or what they think they are entitled to. Because, for millennials, more responsibility means more engagement and a greater opportunity to make their mark. When dared to do more, will not only show what millennials are capable of but improve their work ethic too. In this way, a value-based aptitude is advanced that shifts the focus from entitlement to a 'What can I do' attitude, rather than an attitude of 'What is owed to me'. The turnaround will happen because in advancing work ethic that is intrinsically virtuous and worthy of reward, the ultimate reward will materialise whether in terms of promotion or a salary increase, greater

contentment or a deeply founded satisfaction and gratitude that will contain pride as the source of entitlement. In seeking agreement and reinforcing responsibility, there are five integrated competencies to be mastered. *Firstly, we have to break down silos*. When people work in silos without teams, they get the impression that success and achievements occur independently and depend on an individual person's efforts. This gives rise to an attitude of entitlement in the individual. Collaboration can be facilitated and entitlement can be eroded by getting people to collaborate, brainstorm, and work and play together (Jenkins 2017:183). *Secondly, before making demands, make an effort*. To eliminate entitlement, the focus ought to be on 'earning a voice', rather than 'demanding a voice'. This requires that an aptitude should be instilled to do one's best and forget the rest. Though one may not be satisfied, work towards being content. Likewise, remain confident, yet stay humble. Grateful, yet ambitious. Ultimately, developing this aptitude will earn you a voice and the right to speak out. *Thirdly, we must acquire the aptitude of being a servant.* To stamp out entitlement, in ourselves and in younger cohorts, we as leaders, elders and more experienced, must acquire the aptitude of being a servant. Robert K. Greenleaf (Jenkins 2017:185), in his *The Servant as Leader*, explains servant leadership as a philosophy and set of practices that enrich the lives of individuals, builds better organisations, and creates a more just and caring world. Servanthood puts 'servant' first. It begins with the inclination or disposition that creates a desire and want to serve as the first priority, says Greenleaf. A servant leader prioritises the needs of others as much as the leader prioritises his or her. A servant leader always asks the question 'Why don't I?', instead of 'Why don't they'. As Simon Sinek (Jenkins 2017:186) puts it 'Leaders eat last'. Having such an aptitude will disarm those who feel entitled. *Fourthly, we have to own up to our failure*. The Jenkins study (2017:183) found that pride is an early indicator of entitlement. Therefore, an organisational culture and leadership that acknowledges failure is on a better path to stamping out

entitlement. Leaders can set the tone by modelling the behaviour of pointing fingers at themselves more than others (Jenkins 2017:183). *Fifthly, we have to embrace resistance*. The Espinoza study (2016:106–107) has found that people place resistance at the opposite end of commitment. In other words, if we experience resistance from others, we instantly jump to the conclusion that they are not committed or supportive of our cause, argument or whatever. If viewed as a continuum, resistance lies closer to commitment than compliance. It can lie anywhere between compliance and commitment. Seeing compliance as a sign of commitment makes it difficult to develop others, especially a young generation or to lead change or transformation. Smart people therefore realise that resistance is better than compliance and embrace resistance when experienced. Some may even argue that fair and just resistance is better than compliance. Some may even contemplate that resistance every now and then is a good thing. It keeps things fresh and alive, provided that resistance is expressed in a fair way and that a decent decorum is upheld.

☐ Step to their side, listen and be fair

Meeting resistance with opposition creates a powerplay. It is therefore best practice to recognise the grounds or reasons for resistance and engaging parties by giving them the opportunity to voice their concerns and dissatisfaction. It is much easier, argues Espinoza and Ukleja (2016:107), to channel energy than it is to motivate lethargy. Resistance should therefore be seen as energy waiting to be channelled. The Espinoza study (2016: 107–108) offers a great example of how resistance can be effectively dealt with. The example relates to the Japanese martial arts of Aikido. Morihei Ueshiba, who created this form of martial arts, places the emphasis on defending oneself whilst also protecting one's attackers from injury. Instead of punching and kicking the opponent, Aikido focusses on using the opponent's energy to gain control of them or to deflect them. In other words,

to use for instance, one's 'opponent's' arguments in one's own defence. Aikido teaches the starting point of positioning oneself so that one can see what the attacker(s) can see. The goal is to move with the attacker(s) not against him or her. When one encounters millennials who are on the defence, one should therefore step into their shoes to try and see what they see. In this way, one can use their defensiveness to connect with them by actively listening to them. In other words, 'Step to their side'. This is a phrase that negotiating expert William Ury (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:107–108) uses in his work. Ury offers the following points for consideration:

- resist the temptation to argue
- acknowledge the feelings; points of view; competence and differences of the opposing person(s)
- shift the encounter away from positional bargaining to joint problem solving
- help them to save face
- ask them for constructive criticism
- reaffirm the relationship
- aim for a mutual beneficial outcome and not victory.

Apart from stepping to their side, another important competency, in disarming defensiveness and in dealing with entitlement, is to be a good listener. Try to understand and be fair to the other person(s). We cannot understand where they are coming from if we do not listen to their side of the story, and we will not be able to use their own argument, defence or point of view to formulate our line of thought and fair judgement of the circumstances and possible responses. The worse thing to do is to minimise millennial's input, story or argument.

☐ Connecting instead of correcting

Maturity is the ability to see and act on behalf of others. Immaturity is not being able to see things from someone else's point of view. So often when an immature person is challenged the person finds it difficult to see the world from the millennial's perspective.

This results in the challenged person becoming frustrated and defaulting to correcting instead of connecting first so that the person can see the other one's perspective. In doing so, the challenged person is often seen as a nit-picking and an authoritarian person. By connecting, a person is positioned to act and respond with greater wisdom. All things equal, only in 'flexing' in other words, being flexible and adaptable to the concerns and the perspectives of millennials, will it be possible to correct. Without being connected, correcting will be negatively perceived and will illicit resistance or contempt. Therefore, the Espinoza study (2016:56) argues that 'when there is a choice between getting your way and giving their way, go their way'. The idea that we are going to change members of the millennials as a cohort into what we want them to be, is a strategy destined for failure, the Espinoza study (2016:56) concluded. We can imagine that you are thinking to yourself 'You are telling me I need to be more flexible but what if…'. Yes, you ought to be more flexible only when it makes sense to you. We are not saying that you should become something you are not. The thing is, you are probably going to end up coming off as unauthentic, creating uncertainty and making people pretty uncertain with the sudden and erratic shifts that do not fall in line with the person or organisation they know. But if you refuse to evolve and consider new ways of doing things because the way things have always been done has served you well, you are doing yourself and your organisation a disservice. What then is the middle way? When considering changes, the following two questions could be used as screening tools (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016):

- Does this structural shift resonate with your organisation's mission?
- Is this proposed structure change more an evolution or a revolution of the corporate culture. Skew towards evolution! (pp. 127–128).

In attempting to answer these two questions, it is vital to suspend any biased experiences and grant millennials the benefit of the doubt or giving them greater autonomy when they have gained

the required trust and decorum. Essentially, being more flexible by suspending biased experiences is a visible expression of a psychological contract (Espinoza & Ekleja 2016:60). Chris Argyris (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:60) introduced the concept of a psychological contract to address what he called the 'white space' in relationships between people. This refers to that which is not addressed by a formal, written contract between parties. The function of the psychological contract is to reduce insecurity and building trust. By suspending bias and being more flexible and adaptable demonstrate a good faith effort on the part of one party, mostly the more matured person, to address the real-time expectations and concerns of the other and by in doing so reduce insecurities and building trust. Connecting and building relationships prior to correcting or working towards the truth, optimal solutions or what may be mutually advantageous may therefore prove to be the best practice. But this may only be possible if we have the aptitude of self-differentiation.

☐ Self-differentiating

Self-differentiating is an important competency in flexing. Self-differentiating is simply that we do not take things personally. It is not always about you! Unlike the other competencies, it is a competency we owe ourselves. It helps us use the other competencies with greater effectiveness and without getting emotionally hooked. The Espinoza study (2016:114) found that self-differentiation is important because poorly differentiated people struggle in continued relationships with people who disagree with them, who are not on their team or who are inclined to be entitled. Self-differentiation is therefore the ability to self-regulate and not to take the comments, gestures or behaviours of others personally (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:107–114). In order to be self-differentiating, it is therefore important to be aware of trigger events that create a reactionary behaviour rather than just be responsive. For our own personal health and wellbeing, we have to deal effectively with two forces, namely *separateness* and *togetherness*. The Espinoza study (2016:119) has found that if

the force of togetherness is too strong, one tends to lose one's objectivity and become enmeshed with the other person or group. This results in us not being able to separate someone else's comment(s) or action(s) from who we are. We personalise the comment(s) or behaviour, or as we say 'take it personally'. On the other hand, if the force of separateness is too strong, we have autonomy, but we lose connectivity. We are cut off from the other person or group which in itself is also unhealthy. We become insensitive to their needs and we lose valuable insights they could give us (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:119).

A further consideration is the difference between who we are as persons and our role. According to the Espinoza study (2016:119), we easily confuse the role(s) we fulfil with our identity as person(s). Our roles are mere parts we play, they are not the whole of who we are. When our role(s) are finished, we still continue. A self-differentiated person understands the difference between their person and their role and sees the distinction clearly. As a result, even though our roles might get criticised or impacted, we can stay intact and balanced. If we maintain an equilibrium in so far as it concerns our self-differentiation, when people criticise our different roles, we will have no trouble with not taking it personally when the company or organisation we represent is criticised or being attacked.

Another vital tool to help us to differentiate is to focus on our presence. Presence here implies (1) a deep sense of listening, (2) being open beyond our preconceptions and biases and (3) seeing the importance of letting go of old identities and the need to be always in control. Think of it in this way. It is not the amount of data that we know or our particular skillsets that have the most impact on the world around us, but our presence. Though important, data and skillsets are merely threshold competencies. They are what gets us in the door. They get us our roles. As important as they are, it is you as a people's person, who will make all the difference in how you lead, manage, relate, converse and partner with others. Understanding our presence and its

importance is good, but exponentially important when conversing, relating and partnering with the relational-mediating millennial cohorts. A self-differentiating person can see an anxiety-filled situation as separate from who they are as a person. This allows them to have a non-anxious presence in the midst of a storm and to continue to act with greater authenticity, creativity and integrity when others falter or are overcome by entitlement and selfishness. Without having self-differentiation, it is easy to take an anxious situation and infuse more anxiety into it, thus making it worse. Likewise, without self-differentiation, we can so easily allow situations where people are driven by entitlement and selfish conduct to overcome what is rational and wholesome. Self-differentiating is therefore a very important competency in a world of flux that continually requires flexibility or adaptability.

☐ Informality is the new decorum

Another area that requires flexing is the intrinsic value of informality that millennials treasure. Informality is a new decorum in the millennial age. This is evident from how they dress, communicate and negotiate organisational culture. Informality is therefore simply the way millennials are and not necessarily a manifestation of entitlement and disrespect. Yet, it requires being flexible and adaptable to this new decorum. For example, titles are comprehensible to older generations, whilst millennials see them as perfunctory, if not a barrier to collaborative relationships (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:114–115). They believe calling someone by his or her first name is a sign of relational closeness and respect. Dispensing with formality and applying flexibility could expedite the more important relational exchanges. However, we do not advocate that institutionalised decorum ought not to be preserved for the sake of maintaining a level of informality. Informality should be distinguished from usurping authority and disrespect. In such instances, it is not only questioning authority but also about acting as the authority or as an equal. This is particularly important in applying flexing in situation where coaching is an important element of the relationship. To gain the

most from one's coach, whether theoretical knowledge or tacit experience, we have to revere the authority and established decorum.

☐ Life–work flexibility

We commence this section under the heading 'Be adaptive and favour flexibility' by referring to the importance of applying 'flexing' as a competency in order to overcome the perceived condition that millennials act with a sense of entitlement. The line of thought has been that being flexible, suspending personal bias and setting a different decorum of servanthood would curtail entitlement. But needless to say, this is not the only reason for being more flexible. What also requires 'flexing' is the growing importance of finding a healthy life–work balance. We suggest that this innate value of millennials is not because they are entitled and selfish but rather a world trend towards de-materialisation and self-realisation as we have elucidated in Chapter 3. We therefore have decided to incorporate this important aspect under this discussion. The main reason why this requires 'flexing' is because the mobile technology, in particular, and technology advancement in general, have moved work away from a place to a space (Jenkins 2017:143). Millennials as a cohort grew up with mobile technology and they therefore have a limitless view of when, where and how to work. The Jenkins study (2017:34) has established that 69% of millennials believe that physically working in a regular office is unnecessary. Eighty-eight per cent of millennials desire the freedom to choose when they start and finish work. Seventy-five per cent (Jenkins 2017:211) would like to work from home or other locations where they feel more productive or would like to do so more frequently. The tech-shift from fixed to mobile communication has therefore redefined where and how we work. This, in a certain way, is causing some havoc in life–work harmony.

The Jenkins study (2017:205) has established that 99% of millennials agree that they are increasingly searching for balance

in their lives. What is becoming more evident is that the shift in the life–work balance requires serious flexibility and adaptability, especially in creating a seamless work–life integration. Work and life ought to be better integrated by having greater flexibility in the working conditions. But of equal importance is to integrate 'life' aspects with the working environment. To make this a reality, people ought to be managed on output. This is a major shift from past practices. Previous generations measured loyalty according to the time put in at work, which millennials define it by impact – how meaningful and purposeful their output is. Smart people are flexible and adaptable, and therefore make a crucial shift from managing inputs (time tagged in) to managing outputs (quality of work). This shift in approach has major advantages. Survey statistics from the Jenkins study (2017:61) show that 72% of global business report increased productivity as a direct result of flexible working practices. To make this shift smoother and to ensure that greater flexibility brings greater harmony and stability in life–work integration, the following core competencies should be instilled. *Firstly,* clearly communicate the desired output with real examples whenever possible. Because remote work is less structured than on-site work, clear expectations are critical. *Secondly,* consistently communicate time frames for deliverables. Connect therefore consistently. *Thirdly,* give frequent relevant feedback using collaborative technologies such as 'slack' (Jenkins 2017:62). *Fourthly,* if necessary, schedule a recurring time when the team can collaborate in real-time, whether online or offline. *Fifthly,* monitoring wellbeing (Jenkins 2017:72). The Jenkins study (2017:72) has found that remote workers can have a hard time setting boundaries between work and personal life. The great danger is that remote workers can overwork themselves and burn out. It is therefore vital to ensure that millennial employees maintain a work–life harmony and are taking the appropriate time for themselves. It also requires that we, cast a vision and continue to connect remote workers' efforts with the big picture so that employees do not feel unimportant and isolated (Jenkins 2017:73). *Sixth,* prioritise face-to-face meetups. *Finally,* to

cultivate a culture that is conducive to remote work, we have to focus on developing those character traits that are crucial for the new circumstances, that is work ethic, discipline, self-differentiation, self-realisation, beneficence, proportionality, self-awareness and many other aspects. Too many to mention here, but they resonate throughout this book.

☐ Be flexible and delegate

Finally, we have to be flexible and delegate. Delegation is the catalyst behind growth of any person, business, team and organisation, and requires a flexible mindset. In the 21st century, we cannot have growth and control. If growth is the preferred choice, then we must delegate. To delegate means to entrust a task, responsibility or project to another person, typically one who is less senior than oneself, though this is not a fixed rule. When delegating, authority and not just the task ought to be delegated. Delegating only tasks creates followers. Delegation is therefore a two-way street. The delegating leader must set the tone of the term with integrity and good work ethic, and the team needs to deliver in terms of the set expectations (Jenkins 2017:64). When done correctly, delegation can build trust, save time, build future leaders and contain entitlement. Delegation can be an important competency to instil especially with the millennials. This cohort is more than willing to take up the challenge. Seventy-five per cent of millennials believe their organisation could do more to develop future leaders through delegating authority. But how do we go about delegating to millennials. The Jenkins study (2017:64) has established five small pointers. *Firstly,* select strategically the right person. *Secondly,* clarify expectations by clearly explaining the expected outcome and what success will look like. *Thirdly,* delegation without detail is a disaster. Grant therefore full authority. Also, be flexible and provide ownership that will in turn breed responsibility. *Fourthly,* continuous feedback is crucial and offer input but avoid interference, and *finally* evaluate the outcome, correct if necessary, and celebrate the achievements and results.

◼ Competency #3: Be authentic and create unique experiences

Millennials have been raised in a world that celebrates individual authenticity and they expect and advance a certain level of personalisation. They grew up in the age of customisation and do not agree with the concept of one-size-fits all (Ubl & Arbit 2017:357). But to have an effective engagement with millennials goes beyond a customised approach where they could personalise for instance their playlist or the colour of the sneakers. This is indeed very important, but at a much deeper level, millennials expect and advance greater authenticity and personalisation, as in real-life personal engagements, unique experiences, creating exceptional memories, a unique take on informality and unique rewards and personalise recognition. Authenticity and personalised unique engagements are central themes of millennials. Being authentic and creating unique experiences when conversing, relating and partnering with millennials are therefore core competencies that are required to ensure an effective engagement with millennials. In support of this inference, the following points of illustration and possible responses are offered as examples.

☐ Real-life personal expression and engagement

Millennial's innate desire for authentic real-life expressions and engagements are seeping into every expectation, especially inner personal engagements. Anything appearing to be put on (Ubl & Arbit 2017:212) or false are therefore met with hesitation and even scepticism. Being too formal and institutionalised may be read by millennials as a lack of transparency and may lead to millennial's wondering what is being hidden. For instance, because millennials are focussed on avoiding any pretence, rather than trying to impress millennials with senior leadership delivering formal speeches, a different approach may be more effective. For example, to rather showcase what it is like for an actual real-life

person to work for you. Instead of trying to impress them with numbers and titles, rather showcase the company culture, the atmosphere and work challenges in the office of the Chief Executive Officer, and what the person's career progression and future challenges may look like.

☐ Unique take on work ethic and informality

Millennials have their own unique take on formality and work ethic. Simply put, they have tossed out the formula that says, 'formality equals work ethic' (Ubl & Arbit 2017:210). Millennials define work hours, strict dress code and communication pleasantries as all right, but not deemed essential to doing their jobs or even excelling at it. If it depends on millennials, the three-piece suit and alphabetical memos can be easily be replaced with jeans, and rather than wasting quality time on staff meetings, instant messaging to the boss. For millennials, these formalities have a limited bearing on the quality of work or determination to succeed (Ubl & Arbit 2017:210). Millennials, as already alluded to, also have a unique take on work–life integration. For millennials, it is important that what you see is what you get, and who you are at work is who you are at home. Showing informality and having an informal management approach that is more authentic and real, personal and transparent, can therefore create more authentic relationships and could advance performance.

☐ Creating unique rewards

Millennials like most of us value being rewarded and recognised. Like any other generation, an increase in pay, bonuses, promotions or other forms of reward and recognition are enthusiastically embraced (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:66). However, millennials have an innate disposition to personalisation, customisation and authenticity when it comes to rewards and recognition. They are therefore not into titles for the sake of having a title. Nor do they find the 'cookie cutter person of the month' programme enticing (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:66). One can say that millennials value

what they value – not what we necessarily value! So, before we try to reward and develop a recognition programme, ask them what they want, and the results may be somewhat quite exceptional and authentic. Creating unique personalised rewards whether it is an actual trophy or certificate ought to create positive personal memories in order to be effective and advance millennial engagement. For example, being given support, financial or just free time, as part of a reward system to engage in projects that have a high meaning for millennials, creates far greater memories than the ordinary certificate. Millennials value time off and the opportunity to participate in community or social responsibility projects during company time, even as part of the reward programme. Therefore, we have to make an effort to make incentives and rewards unique, memorable and tailored to the personalities of the particular millennial – where possible, obviously. Let's remind ourselves that the one-fits-all approach is more detrimental and could even undermine loyalty and performance.

☐ Creating unique experiences

Unique and authentic experiences matter much to millennials. Experiences that are personalised impact greatly on levels of gratification, relationships, happiness and spending habits, and these experiences also shape millennials. Do we have to remind us that millennials are a cohort that grew up with everything at their fingertips? They are looking for unique experiences that they cannot get online. They are in fact on a never-ending quest to discover experiences that are one of a kind (Jenkins 2017:37). They are not just looking for ordinary one-fits-all type of experiences, but rather experiences that are more closely associated with their identities, values and social behaviour (Jenkins 2017:194). This approach of millennials is not without foundation nor without substance. There is more to it. According to Cornell University psychology professor Dr Thomas Gilovich and his colleagues Dr Amit Kumar from the University of Chicago and Dr Matthew Killingsworth from the University of California

(Kumar et al. 2014), experimental purchases (money spend on doing) tend to provide more enduring happiness than material purchases (money spend on having). Millennials are more inclined to engage in experiences that are more pleasurable and exciting than acquiring material goods (Jenkins 2017:194). When millennials spend money on experiences, they find that their level of satisfaction increases over time (Jenkins 2017:194). This inclination of millennials is supported by research. Research shows that humans derive more meaning and joy from experiences that are unique and authentic than objects (Jenkins 2017:194). So, when millennials are faced with a decision to buy a new 'thing' for the family or go on vacation, they prefer to go on vacation. This is also consistent with the emergence of the Fourth Awakening as elucidated in Chapter 3. In today's world of material abundance, our basic needs have been met, so naturally we are looking to fulfil higher order needs. The higher order needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs would be love, belonging, self-realisation, esteem and expressions that also include social acceptance, family togetherness and team participation. These are all aspects that are now innate in the millennials' approach to life. Such benefits can be offered via carefully extended experiences. Experiences that are very unique and personalised, that create memories, are socially rewarding, and provide talking points. Experiences that are so unique and authentic that we feel compelled to talk about our experiences, and when doing so getting even more joy (Jenkins 2017:195).

■ Competency #4: Respect and expect diversity

Millennials not only respect diversity but also expect diversity. Growing up, millennials were constantly told to voice their opinions and express their values. They have grown accustomed to it because they have experienced first-hand that innovation and disruption can come from the smallest voices (Ubl & Arbit 2017:367). They have also grown up during their formative years

in very diversified families and societies. With the consequence that diversity whether ethnic, religious, political or diversity of thought, ideas and perspectives are the new normal when it comes to millennials. Diversity has become such a vital part of society that it has become crucial to foster an environment of respect, inclusion, open communication and freedom to create and implement ideas, to capitalise on the diverse cognitive power of the modern generation. Organisations and people, that want to thrive in the future, will therefore need to have the skillsets to create diversity that is in places of work and to deal with differences along these and other dimensions. The reward will be manifold and multidimensional. For instance, like-minded teams maintain, whilst diverse teams innovate as more perspectives in a team lead to better decision-making. The Rainer survey (2011:27) reveals that diverse teams or workforces can respond better to the disruption and high flux of this century. According to research, non-diverse teams are prone to approach problem solving in a more uniform manner. This suppresses creativity and innovation and limits the solutions the team will explore (Jenkins 2017:27). A diverse team also creates perspective diversity. The necessary diversity of perspectives can come from all quarters: different backgrounds, personalities, gender, race and ethnicities, experiences, thinking patterns, locations, skills, leadership style and ages (Jenkins 2017:27). A diverse team is better able to view a problem from different points of departure, resulting in better and more considered solutions. What is more, testing ideas against opposing views is a good way to refine and develop a solution. Therefore, the greater the diversity, the greater the breath of the strengths available. Achieving cognitive diversity through a diverse team approach therefore enables team members to ask better questions, be more effective and improve the experiences of all the stakeholders. Cognitive diversity therefore ought to be encouraged because cognitive diversity fuels innovation, enhances employee engagement and boosts customer satisfaction. To that may be added the importance of generational diversity. Dennis Kennedy, founder and Chief Executive Officer of the National Diversity Council (Ubl & Arbit 2017) says:

Managing generational diversity is key for organisations to gain a competitive advantage and make a positive impact on employees' moral; productivity and retention. (p. 29)

◾ Competency #5: Promote purpose and meaning

Millennials are at times perceived to be indifferent, careless and lacking commitment. But the Espinoza study (2016:148) found that this may not necessarily be a true assessment of the millennials. What millennials want, or rather need, is to find meaning in their work and relationships. This is an intrinsic value of millennials. The Espinoza study (2016:148) argues that millennials are not apathetic. They care deeply about a lot of things. They just need a reason to care and to like what they are engaged in. According to the Career Advisory Board (Jenkins 2017:39), millennials first and foremost want a sense of meaning as part of a successful career. Nearly three-quarters of millennials according to the Jenkins study (2017:39) rated meaningful work as one of the three most important factors that determine career success for them. Millennials must see the meaning and purpose of all the hustle and buzzle. The Why! The reason being that, above all else, the millennial generation is hungry for meaning. Millennials are always going to hunt for jobs in which they can make a difference, though its manifestation can take a variety of forms. They can be making a positive impact on ordinary people or animals' lives, or the community at large by engaging in political and human rights activities for instance (Ubl & Arbit 2017:192). Therefore, to incentivise and motivate millennials, the so-called indifferent cohort, we have to make it matter to them. They want to know why. Why they have to do certain tasks; why they should abstain from certain behavioural traits; etc. Remember, in terms of the Maslow theory of needs, millennials are entering between esteem and self-realisation. They work to live not the other way around. They want to find meaning. This is what ignites them. When something matters to them, they are

not indifferent, apathetic and lack loyalty, but are fired up. Therefore, to grow our all stars, we have to make it matter to them. Do not get us wrong, millennials still care about the paycheque. But most millennials are deeply motivated by the intrinsic value of the work or cause they are engaging in. They care about the bigger picture, because they were raised with the idea that: 'If you are going to work, be sure you do something that's meaningful to you' (Ubl & Arbit 2017:265).

There is luckily a Holy Grail in assisting millennials to establish what is meaningful and purposeful, and empower them to pursue that. Firstly, we have to offer them a vision of why! Secondly, we have to realise that we are key to their success, and thirdly we have to create an environment for self-realisation. We will be brief about the first two aspects as we wish to be more elaborative on the third aspect.

☐ Offer a vision of why

German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote 'He who has a why can endure any how' (Jenkins 2017:39). This also resonates in the personal experience of Viktor Frankl, a holocaust survivor and author of *Man's Search for Meaning* (Frankl 2000:15). Frankl's experience, as he so eloquently described it, confirms Nietzsche's assertion that a strong sense of meaning is central to rising above adversity and embrace life fully. Having said that, when millennials try to establish the meaning and purpose by asking the question 'why', many of us experience and perceive this as a signal of defiance and resistance. Admittedly, how the other person hears the word 'why' and the subtext intended may cause tension and apprehension that may be generationally and personality specific. The fact is that more often than not, millennials really do want to know why and moreover, they were raised at home and at school to be mindful and alerted to the meaning and purpose and therefore to ask 'why'. Therefore, the best practice is to suspend judgement and embrace the question, and even if we think it is resistance, it is still better to embrace that too. But the best way

perhaps is to deal with the question of 'why', proactively. In other words, to offer a vision of why something is meaningful and purposeful. But let's be frank, more often than not we fall short in communicating the 'why' – the 'why' behind the organisation; the 'why' behind tasks or procedures and the 'why' behind certain required behavioural traits. Therefore, smart people establish the vision of 'why' upfront. But be mindful that the reasons for doing something 'leaks' or are either not comprehended immediately or may change substance. Therefore, the 'why' ought to be communicated and established repeatedly before the 'what' so that millennials could place a 'value', purpose or meaning on the activity, the guidance offered, etc. This helps millennials to ascertain what role the person is playing in the grand scheme of things (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:155). Jim Collins author of '*Good to Great*' (Jenkins 2017:40) says: 'Teams should be sick of hearing the organisations "why."' Collins suggests that leaders should ingrain the 'why' into every single person in their organisations so that they have a meaningful lens to view their respective engagements, whatever the nature thereof (Jenkins 2017:40). Like the old proverb, 'before you ask men [women] to gather lumber to build a ship, let them acquire a love for the sea' (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:155). It is therefore best practice to focus on the importance of recognising the satisfaction millennials stand to gain from performing well and let them feel like they will be or are already making a valuable contribution. Don Charlton, founder and chief executive officer of JazzHR provides the following great example on how best to communicate this valuable aspect and the 'why' when it comes to instilling meaning and purpose. For example, let's say we are tired of seeing a millennial's phone light up with another WhatsApp notification. If we confront the person saying something to the fact that 'WhatsApp is for afterwork', we will elicit a negative response. Instead, a better way to say it would be something like, 'people who advance quickly have avoided unnecessary distractions at work and all those phone notifications could easily distract you from your goal of being successful at this Company'. Don Charlton

reiterates with the aforesaid example the importance of keeping a dialogue going that emphasises the importance and benefits of doing what is right in order to incite millennials to take greater notice and value the importance of 'why' things ought to be done in a certain way (Jenkins 2017:39). However, having said that, we agree with Espinoza (2016:54) 'that you cannot put motivation into unmotivated people'. The best we can do is: firstly, to realise that we are key to their success, and secondly, to create an environment for self-realisation. Let's focus on these two important aspects.

☐ We are key to their success

Another Holy Grail to help millennials find meaning and purpose is to see you as key to their success. As eluded above, it is not our responsibility to give someone meaning. We only need to help them find meaning. What is therefore important, is to have the awareness and competency to inspire millennials to find meaning in the everyday engagements, such as the work they do and see how their contribution(s) matters (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:148). What is at stake here is that we have to find joy ourselves when millennials that we are engaged in experience success. This does not imply that you should evaluate your success on the discontentment or otherwise, and the quality of meaning and purpose that millennials attach to, or comprehend. When a person feels discontent because the person does not find meaning in the work he or she is doing or in a relationship for instance, it is a different matter to when a person is discontent because of the quality of meaning or purpose a person attaches to or that a person comprehends. The latter is very much dependent on the values, convictions, etc. that a person possesses. Whilst in the former case, a person's lack of contentment may be caused by a lack of vision or not being able to see opportunities, in which case, you, through following certain strategies, could greatly assist a person to overcome such discontentment. Therefore, the third Holy Grail to focus on is to

create an environment for self-realisation or creating an environment for a millennial to be virtuous in their expression of their abilities, potential and attitudes.

▢ Creating an environment for self-realisation

We have established so far, firstly, that it is important to proactively ingrain the 'why' by emphasising the satisfaction that millennials stand to enjoy by doing something or refraining from doing something. Secondly, to accept that you are key to their success and that you ought to find joy in their success. What is of even greater importance is to create an environment for self-realisation or differently said, to create a platform from where millennials can excel and become the best they can be. In simple terms, to be able to inspire millennials to have fun and success in what they are doing and make their mark in this world. To create this platform from where millennials can excel, you have to apply your mind to what Gary Hamel, a management innovation expert (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:152) has to say. Hamel is of the view that you ought to reinvent your management style if you are desirous to inspire others to bring all their capabilities to work every day or for instance to have a beneficial relationship. Essentially, what Hamel argues for is that we have to develop new attitudes and new competencies to incite and empower ourselves and others to find the true meaning and purpose in what we are doing and engaged in. Before we briefly elucidate a few core competencies that may help you improving your own performance and capabilities to help millennials to achieve greater self-realisation through advanced purpose and meaning, we have to pause and reflect on Hamel's hierarchy of human capabilities that contribute to competitive success. This would provide the circumscribed space within which you could establish the new competencies that you may employ in helping millennials to develop a strong sense of meaning and purpose. According to Hamel's hierarchy (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:152), the following human capabilities contribute to success:

- *Obedience*. Taking direction and follow rules.
- *Diligence*. Being accountable and not taking shortcuts.
- *Intellect*. Smart, eager to improve skills and willing to borrow ideas from others.
- *Initiative*. Do not wait to be told and seek out new ways to add value.
- *Creativity*. Inquisitive, irresponsible and not afraid to say stupid things.
- *Passion*. Climb over obstacles and refuse to give up.

Hamel (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:152) measures the contribution of each of these capabilities to value creation in the following way:

- Passion: 35%
- Creativity: 25%
- Initiative: 20%
- Intellect: 15%
- Diligence: 5%
- Obedience: 0%.

Although Hamel gave obedience a score of zero, he admits that obedience is worth something, because if we do not follow rules, chaos would ensue. The reason for awarding a low value, as Hamel explains, is 'when it comes to value creation or competitive success, rule-following-employees don't contribute'. Accordingly, Hamel concluded that value creation is primarily the product of *passion, creativity* and *initiative* that contributes 80% towards value creation and as such competitive success. These findings are very much consistent with millennial's innate disposition to extract as much meaning and purpose from their engagements, by being passionate, creative and willing to seek out new ways and in so doing add value and advance competitiveness and overall success. But traditionally, more emphasis has been placed on the capabilities of obedience, diligence and intellect. According to the Espinoza study (2016:153), in the 'old school', employees are expected to work their way up the value creation hierarchy very much in the same way that individuals must meet psychological needs before they can address safety needs in

Maslow's hierarchy. Followers of the 'Old School' would like to see millennials master the lower levels of Hamel's hierarchy of human capabilities (i.e. obedience, diligence and intellect) before they are allowed to offer their creativity, passion and initiative. The problem is that when you focus on the rule-based approach, you might just miss the great potential that millennials bring to the table in the area of passion, creativity and initiative. In the case of millennials, once a person is convinced of the persons' own purpose and the 'why' or meaning in doing something, passion, creativity and initiative are unleashed exponentially. It is therefore a fruitless exercise and usually ends up with people being frustrated when the focus is on compliance and rule obedience. Smart people and effective managers to the contrary focus rather on creating an atmosphere in which millennials can take initiative, respond to meaningful challenges, have the freedom to decide how they pursue the challenges and have a sense of urgency about the meaning of their engagements, whether it is work-related or otherwise (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:154). In other words, creating an environment for self-realisation in which millennials could engage in work or otherwise, in a virtuous, meaningful and purposeful way, and in so doing, advancing competitive success. To create an environment that is befitting to the human capabilities for competitive success in other words promoting passion, creativity and initiative, we have identified five core competencies that may greatly assist in creating such an environment. For the sake of brevity, these core competencies or capabilities will be briefly outlined and may require further deliberation and elucidation.

Firstly, building differentiated experiences. According to Glassdoor (Nunez 2015), it seems that the new generation of millennials view work as a material purchase because there is a close relationship between the years of experience and happiness at work. Older workers seem to be less satisfied. Glassdoor has observed that with each additional year of experience, a decrease in overall employee satisfaction is recorded. To meet the overall expectations of millennials and the overarching goal of improved

working experiences, the focus ought to be shifted to consider work as an experimental purchase, where the anticipation of going to work is heightened and made exciting, and job satisfaction increases over time (Jenkins 2017:195). Jacob Morgan (2017:1, 6, 9) believes that to achieve this shift, organisations have to evolve from being utility (basic components of work) and productivity (getting the most out of people) driven, to an engagement that makes employees happy by creating exceptional employee experiences. According to Morgan, if *employee engagement* is the short-term adrenaline shot, then *employee experiences* is the long-term redesign of the organisation. Morgan defines attention to exceptional employee experiences, as organisations where people are excited to show up for work because of the exceptional cultural, technological and physical environment of the organisation (Jenkins 2017:193). In other words, to deliver exceptional experiences for employees right throughout the organisation and lifecycle of employees, a reassessment of organisational processes, policies and programmes is required with the main focus on creating an environment where people want, not need, to show up for work. This is a very important qualitative difference in condition. Organisations can no longer assume that employees, when showing up for work, are indeed present. Morgan therefore emphasises the importance that a strong desire to be at work ought to be instilled by focussing more and more on people and to bring exceptional experiences into our organisation. This would require core competencies beyond threshold competencies (i.e. technical skills) to be further developed that instil an overall orientation towards the essential essence of people as human beings and not just agents of production.

With the experience seeking millennials becoming the dominant generation that account for 75% of the global workforce in 2025, you have to rethink and re-engineer how to deliver a signature experience at work. Although benefits and salaries are expectations for millennials, they are not simply interested to fill a job for the sake of money or prestige.

They also want to have a strong sense of meaning and self-realisation created by a strong culture and extraordinary experiences at work. If they do not find themselves in a conducive environment, millennials can become the most disengaged at work of any generation. This is supported by the findings of the Jenkins study (2017:196) that has established that up to 71% of millennials found themselves to be disengaged at work. This focus therefore has to shift to offset this disturbing trend. This challenge fortunately is not going unattended. Nearly 42% of executives rated employee experiences as very important and a further 38% as important. So, all in all, 80% of executives consider this aspect as important (Jenkins 2017:197). But the problem is that only 22% felt that their organisations were adept at creating distinguished employee experiences and 59% said that they were not prepared or were ill prepared to address the problem of employment experiences (Jenkins 2017:197). Considering the overarching expectations of millennials and their lack of engagement if conditions are not conducive, creating differentiated experiences is critical to advance performance and vital to create heightened engagement. Organisations that wish to remain competitive in today's global world and win the war for talent, have to put this aspect on their agenda. Shergill (2017) in his *Economic Times* article with the title 'Employee Experience in the Time of Uncertainty' put it in this way: 'An enhanced employee experience impacts key individual and collective drivers of business growth, namely passion; proficiency; productivity and performance'. This view is supported by other research (Jenkins 2017:196) that concluded that organisations that focus on creating differentiated experiences far outperform organisations that do not. Differentiated experiences must therefore be an end-to-end integral part of the entire life cycle of employees. This can even be achieved in small steps that change the culture. For example, changing the focus from 'job descriptions' to 'job experiences' is a subtle way to get stakeholders beginning to think in this direction. Companies such as Apple, Google and Facebook that have taken a more

integrated, wholistic approach by incorporating life and work aspects that is exercise, collaboration, health and wellbeing, food and nature, are increasing their competitiveness and are setting new touchstones to follow in this regard.

Secondly, allowing millennials to put their mark on the future can be another important core competency that would advance self-realisation on the part of millennials. This can be achieved by allowing for personal choice, developing journey maps, integrating goals, and emphasising company culture and values. To allow millennials to put their mark on the future you should first and foremost allow for personal choice. Personal choice in this context does not equate with autonomy because it is much more. It is allowing millennials to think about what they best contribute to the process of value creation. The Espinoza study (2016:156) offers some great questions to help millennials process personal choice:

- What do you most need from your work?
- What makes for a really good day?
- What would you miss if you left this job?
- What did you like best about other jobs that you have had?
- How do you like to spend your time outside of work?
- Tell me about a time you felt most energised at work?

Once you have established their personal choices you can help them realising their potential through personal engagements and unique experiences that are very human centric because the best experiences are very personal. The better you know the millennials in our organisation, the better the experiences that you can deliver and the better the journey maps that you can deliver in collaboration with the individual persona. By creating journey maps and unique personas, you are essentially, in a sense, managing their energy. This is an important element because millennials already have a sense of urgency about their own development and the goals they want to realise. Smart people therefore focus on tools like journey maps to help millennials see the organisation's goals as an extension of their

personal goals. In doing so, goals are integrated and a focussed engagement ensues. Helping to integrate personal and organisation goals requires giving good direction. The provision of good guidance requires that you 'flip' the bias that employees should attend to authority so that you rather attend to your employees' development needs. The emphasis here is to focus on the development needs of the person relating to and to shift the focus from authoritarian to 'let's partner for performance' (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:141). The process of partnering can be further facilitated by being purposeful with company perks. The number one thing that millennials want to know about a company, after establishing the compensation and perks, is the company culture, values and purpose. This opens up the opportunity to integrate perks with company culture, value and purpose. In other words, aligning perks with company culture, values and purpose so that millennials can develop a stronger sense of purpose and meaning and how their goals can be achieved by meeting the culture, values and purpose of the company. Jenkins (2017:208) lists a few good examples of companies that offer perks in line with the company culture, values and purpose:

- Zynga, an online and mobile gaming company, has an on-site video arcade.
- Airbnb, a community-driven hospitality company, offers employees $2000 a year to spend on visiting properties on their home-sharing site.
- REI, a retail and outdoor recreation services company offers an employee a challenge grant where the employee gets $500 in products for an outdoor adventure challenge.
- New Belgium Brewing Company gives employees a 1 week trip to Belgium after they have been 5 years with the company.
- Yahoo provides employees with corporate outings such as concerts and backyard barbeques.
- Freedom & Peters, a full-service law firm has an annual 'luggage party' when four employees are randomly chosen for an all-expense paid trip to Las Vegas.

Thirdly, you have to be continuously connecting the dots for millennials to see the bigger picture. It is important for them to see how they can realise their own potential, whilst working towards achieving the full potential of the company or organisation they are engaged in. Millennials are often, for reason already explained, overcome by narrow sightedness that has an adverse effect on the potential to realise their aspirations. The myopic view may be broadened by helping millennials to understand how others are impacted. This may also help millennials with the struggle they often have with cause-and-effect relationships and the struggle to see and experience their own footprints. Though millennials are very unique in their resolve to make a difference, some tend to be myopic, whilst others need reaffirmation on how they are making a difference. This may be corrected by helping millennials to see the bigger picture by connecting the dots between everyday tasks and the big picture objectives, that is best set out in the journey maps. This is what is referred to in the Espinoza study (2016:126) as 'broadening'. With 'broadening', the emphasis is placed on coaching millennials how to recognise numerous options, opportunities and potential consequences. It also involves teaching organisational and circumstantial awareness. In the everyday vernacular this is called 'connecting the dots'. Apart from showing out and connecting cause and effect, 'connecting the dots' also means connecting what millennials are doing with the company's goals, values and purpose, and how their 'independent'' action(s) or inaction(s) benefit or not, the team at large. In this way, 'broadening' is about giving your knowledge and experience with the purpose of developing other and reaching their full potential.

Apart from using journey maps or other means to make the connection, the following practical interventions can be considered (Ubl & Arbit 2017:194–195):

- *The physical connection.* This method is also called 'line of sight'. Its intent is to connect each employee's work to the mission through physical connection.

- *The family connection*. This method is connecting the mission or specific work assignment to their loved ones by asking employees to state how a loved one would benefit.
- *The individual connection*. To capture just how purposeful everyone's job is, each employee can be asked to contribute a story that convey how each person found meaning in the work they are doing and how they are realising their own aspirations and potential. This could increase engagement; loyalty and pride. KPMG an audit firm has launched what they have called the 'High Purpose Initiative'. Each employee has been asked to contribute to their 10 000 'stories challenge'.
- *The peer connection*. Invite peers to share when they see and experience others doing something meaningful. Building a network could become a major contributor to creating and understanding the bigger picture.

To broaden the insight and awareness of opportunities, challenges, consequential action, etc., it is best practice to start with something easy and digestible. Instead of bulky manuals, you could rather consider conversations and become a storyteller. This helps millennials interpret symbols, rituals, routines, successes, failures, values, etc. (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:129). It also keeps the message unambiguous and simple. Here you do not suggest that the message should be simplistic and treating complex matters as if they were much simpler than they really are. What we suggest is what Leonardo da Vinci once said: 'Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication'. In other words, keep the message short and sweet. Finally, to ensure that millennials remain cause and value-driven and within the 'bigger picture', employee experiences and communications that are aiming to advance self-realisation, must be routinely revisited for necessary cause corrections and adjustments. This ought to be not in isolation but in the spirit of collaboration. Therefore, you have to create feedback systems and pulse surveys, that are simple, fast and frequent that provide quick insights and suggestions for cause corrections (Jenkins 2017:198)

Fourthly, allocating time for passion projects. A more recent practice amongst some Fortune 500 companies is to utilise passion projects as a way to greater self-realisation. Employees are given a certain percentage of their time to work on whatever they want. This can be personal or work-related in nature. The only proviso is that it is developmental and fulfils an itch they do not have enough time to scratch. This may also be part of an incentive programme. Millennials are particularly attracted to programmes like this. When you set them on passion projects, millennials get the opportunity to feed their innovative spirit and desire to make a meaningful difference. They are also reminded that they are valued as a human being and not just agents of production and money makers.

Finally, let them have fun. We have left the most important element in creating an environment for self-realisation for last. This is done deliberately because the element paves the way for the next topic on creativity and imagination. The most important element in promoting self-realisation amongst millennials is to have fun. Remember, many millennials and that also applies to most working adults spend most of their daily discretionary time at work and they often converse and relate with co-workers more than their own family and friends. Millennials as we have already seen take this fact very seriously. Remember, for millennials, home is work and work is home. This is not a cohort willing to wait until 5 pm on a Friday to let loose and have fun. The importance of having fun goes beyond wearing jeans or yoga pants to work on a Friday. Having fun at work is very much part of the work–life integration and goes to the core of their level of job satisfaction. How much 'fun' we have, is personal and organisational specific. However, it all goes back to be authentic and original. If you are forcing fun or putting on an appearance, millennials will see right through it. If you are not original in your ideas about fun, it is better to let a millennial do it. Given who they are, believe us this will be exceptional. But please do not forget to give them parameters and a budget. Therefore, let's put some playfulness to the otherwise stressful working environment

and let's make the best of the time we spend at work. As Lipman-Bluman and Leavitt (1999) argue, 'temporary playfulness among adults clear the air; so, they can see the world in new ways'. They argue that playfulness disinhibits, and in a way playfulness is allowing adults to move towards deeper, easier and more uncensored communication. Playfulness is also a relief valve that reduces the tensions imposed by the pressures of intense consuming work. Playfulness, most importantly, revigorated passion and provides the atmosphere to be creative and let the imagination loose.

◾ Competency #6: Put imagination to work and encourage creativity

Business often equates innovations with competitive advantages and rightly so. Apart from the so-called 'hardware' components that is devices, innovation is more about new ideas and methods. Therefore, underlying innovation is two very important capabilities, namely *imagination* and *creativity*. This then is the focus of this section, where we elucidate those competencies, we ought to master to help millennials to put their imagination and creativity to work. There is ample literature on how to spark imagination and creativity. The mantra of 'thinking out of the box' has become somewhat cliché, but the idea of allowing our imagination and creativity to 'flow' will forever remain innate, simply because it is telic to human beings. Millennials in this regard have an advantage because they are the 'plug-and-play' cohort that are already outside the box. When it comes to imagination and creativity they are the head of the creative class. What therefore is required in order to boost competitive advantage is to tap into millennial's imagination and creativity, by proactively creating and facilitating an environment in which they can release their imagination and creativity. Having the competencies or capabilities to create a conducive environment is vital because as we have all observed, creative people do not generally fit a mechanistic or efficiency model where the

boundaries are set by hierarchal authoritativeness. It is therefore not so much about managing job descriptions but rather managing millennial's energy. Furthermore, creative people need to be allocated chunks of time for focussed thoughts and problem solving. They need time uninterrupted from the intrusion of organisational policies and mundane routines. Creative people are also like 'strawberries' because they are an emotional bunch that may be touchy at times. But if they are given the space and support they need, we will be generally impressed with the imagination and creativity that are unleashed. Therefore, it is vital to identify the 'All Stars' as soon as possible. Moreover, creative people need mentoring, coaching and training that are befitting to their personality type. Likewise, they ought to know that failure is something that is embraced and that they will not be corrected in condescending ways. What therefore is required is that certain capabilities or competencies ought to be mastered and established to encourage millennials to be imaginative and creative. That is, if a person or organisation wish to be competitive in the first place. Let's briefly elucidate some of these core competencies.

☐ Identifying the 'all stars'

It is a common theme from studies (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:142–143) that millennials get bored with their job descriptions and other assignments. Smart and effective people anticipate this and are always on the lookout when the need for new challenges is arising and try to create new opportunities before millennials become unfocussed. This can be a very involved process and also very time consuming. What is however vital is to identify the 'All Stars' as quickly as possible and give them a platform to express their imagination and creativity. To facilitate this process, it is required to identify early on in the process, competencies that differentiate between being effective (i.e. having creativity) and being challenged (i.e. lack initiative). To help develop the 'All Stars' a professional growth and career development programme as part of a journey map should be developed. It is vital to keep

the 'All Stars' engaged, as 71% of millennials, especially the 'All Stars', are likely to leave an organisation if they are not satisfied with the skills development they receive (Jenkins 2017:35).

☐ They want a coach

Secondly, we have to understand that the 'All Stars' do not want a babysitter. They want a coach. When the 'All Stars' look for guidance and collaboration from their superiors, they want a relationship that is more on the lines of coaching and less babysitting. A babysitter hovers and watches every move and may talk down in a condescending way, knowing that he or she is in charge. A coach instead grooms the 'All Stars'. He or she does not scold when the 'All Starts' make a mistake but rather builds a path to refine skills and instil an even deeper desire to be imaginative and creative. It is all about bettering the 'All Stars' rather than punishing them or hovering over them (Ubl & Arbit 2017:185). When we assume a mindset or disposition, it is always better to act more like a coach than a boss. In doing so, we will be better leaders and make the 'All Stars' stronger and better in what they do best. We therefore have to remain mindful that millennials are seeking a coach at work who can behave and guide with authenticity and integrity, listen like a trusted confidant, instil discipline and motivate like a good coach.

☐ Culture of reverse mentoring

What is becoming most important is a willingness to listen and even to be taught, or reverse mentored. Reverse mentoring is a 'learning relationship' (Jenkins 2017:48) between a younger mentor and an older mentee. This gives rise to a new perspective on mentorship. Senior executives or veteran employees or older members of an organisation are paired with a younger generation person, who then shares his or her knowledge and views on a variety of topics, such as technology, social media, leadership, workplace trends and more. Today's, younger generation carries a very unique and higher demand skillset and knowledge than

previous generations that makes reverse mentoring an essential element for achieving competitive success. Reverse mentoring gives a broad range of individuals the chance to offer up their views, ideas, knowledge and experience on a level playing field. In this way, reverse mentoring creates and environment of trust, belonging, understanding, support and encouragement that could advance overall, across the organisation, an environment that promotes imagination and creativity.

Admittedly, reverse mentoring does not have to be a separate free-standing initiative because it can be fully incorporated into the principles of coaching, provided that coaching is done as an interactive process, as it ought to be. Whether reverse mentoring is a free-standing intervention or integrated in a proper coaching style of management, the benefits remain manifold and stack in favour of promoting and advancing innovation and creativity, not only amongst millennials but also at a cross-generational level. In the Jenkins study (2017:52–53), the following benefits of reverse mentoring are listed:

- *Transfer of knowledge*. Relationships that span different generations allow knowledge and experience to be passed on.
- *Increase retention.* Reverse mentoring gives millennials the opportunity to contribute and make an input.
- *Demonstrate value.* Reverse mentoring provides an opportunity for millennials to understand the value they can bring to the organisation, ultimately helping them to be engaged at work.
- *Compound growth.* Both parties are developed. Millennials are hungry for the insights older people can share, and older generations can come to understand what the future holds.
- *Inspires fresh perspectives*. The younger generation can offer insights into an organisations target market and they can use social media to advance a brand or provide advice on a digital platform.
- *Diminishes stereotypes.* Various viewpoints and assumptions across generations can transform into awareness and appreciation.

- *Coherent communication.* Clear and focussed communication are the result when generations are intentional about connecting.
- *Shared satisfaction.* Individuals gain satisfaction when sharing helpful and valuable information.
- *Embrace diversity.* Help and promote diversity of thought.

☐ Delivering training that excites

In addition to coaching and creating a culture of mentorship that incorporates reverse mentoring, delivering training that transforms is also very important to encourage innovation and creativity. What is important here is not the content of the training because that is organisation specific. Rather what is vital is the type of training offered to millennials. That in turn impacts on our attitude towards training of millennials. As mentioned so many times before, millennials, mainly because of their unique communication skills and the various platforms that they have grown accustomed to, prefer concise, succinct and unambiguous communication. This very much applies to any training that is offered. Millennials respond favourably to microlearning solutions that are brief, agile, easily accessible, instant and relatable. Here are a few pointers that are suggestive of the style for training that millennials would find enjoyable and relevant. We have decided to incorporate the proposals from the Jenkins study (2017:166–167) because it goes to the core of the style or the way any training should be offered. Though the proposals are more threshold competencies or technical skills, we are mindful that this may in an indirect way shape human behaviour and attitudes that are most befitting to the specific needs of millennials in this regard. The Jenkins study suggests that training should meet the following conditions or criteria:

- *Be brief and beautiful.* Millennials consume in bite-sizes, thus the training most likely to appeal should be brief and succinct. Training content has to be beautifully presented and authentically mirror what millennials normally would enjoy on the Internet.

- *Agile and accessible.* Training should be in short intervals and digitally compatible to be easily inserted in their day-to-day lives.
- *Instant and intelligent.* Offer smart learning opportunities using, for instance, quick how-to articles, videos or interactive infographics where users can access content that they can apply instantly.
- *Collaborative and communal.* Create groups where millennials can learn from experts and peers, and where they can contribute their own experiences.
- *Relevant and reliable*. Training should remain relevant to ever-changing and real challenges that form part of the millennial's day at work. The content has to be relevant and relatable.
- *Blendable and bindable*. It is imperative that their training merges digital with real world activities.

☐ Embrace failure

Millennials are a generation of people who hate to fail. They are not used to doing it and if they do, like most of us, they do not want to be reminded of it or at least not in a condescending way. That is why it is very useful to start discussions with phrases such as 'I know how much you want to succeed here…' or 'I know you don't want to let anyone down…' or 'If you are serious about that, here's what needs to be done'. This kind of messaging prime millennials to push any sensitivity aside; listen to the advice and work even harder to improve and avoid failure or letting someone down (Ubl & Arbit 2017:370). But when they do fail, let's embrace failure. In fact, that is the trending thing to do. Failure is no longer confined to the weak nor do we have to banish failure into the darkness of existence. Failure is a popular subject these days and it is 'politically correct' to admit to failure. Jenkins (2017:126) analysed popular speeches as far back as 1774, and the theme 'embrace failure' emerged as the sixth most popular theme. Failure even outranked themes like 'be kind', and 'dream big'. What is even a further eye-opener is

that of the 38 speeches with the theme of 'embrace failure', 35 of them were made after the year 2000 (Jenkins 2017:126). This has not always been the case and perhaps in today's hyper connected world where failure is more public, and any wrong move and the social media can immortalise one's failure. But apart from this reality, why is it so vital to embrace failure? Benjamin Franklin says it best: 'The things that hurt, instruct'. Failure is a coach. Trial and error are what forge stronger character and virtue. On the other hand, failure-free-individuals, if they do exist, or those who are indifferent to their own failures, grow into person(s) who lack the grit to succeed and fall into a state of being mediocre. Embracing failure makes it easier to use the many opportunities to give direction when mistakes are made. Giving someone the space to fail at a task or goal can be just as an important tool to guide millennials to greater imagination and exceptional creativity, as any formal training programme. Therefore, it is best practice to give guidance and advice in pursuance of the intended outcome and still leave room for mistakes. But obviously mistakes can only happen to a certain level and for that reason, pre-emptive action may be justified at times, and a safety net to get things back on track should always be a consideration. The question therefore is how to help millennials to overcome failure in an effort to encourage them to be and remain innovative and creative. Ultimately, we have two choices when it comes to reacting to failure. We can fail 'backwards' or to fail 'forward' (by Jenkins 2017:128). Obviously, smart people fail 'forward' and view failure as deferred success. Millennials can be assisted in making the choice through the following interventions proposed in the Jenkins study (2017:128):

- *Display empathy.* Listen and display empathy or we could share our own struggles and stories of failure.
- *Believe in them.* Highlight the strengths, skills and attributes of the person involved. Cultivate the belief external events should not be connected to self-image. Millennials should learn not to base their self-worth on their performance.

- *Encourage ownership.* Millennials should be taught that they are forfeiting an opportunity to learn and grow if they do not own their failure.
- *Emphasise the journey.* Help them to view failure as a tollgate instead of a roadblock.
- *Contextualise.* Offer content around the failure.
- *Affirm effort.* Affirm that which lies within the control of the millennials, such as effort, empathy or strategy.
- *Stress strengths.* Failure can be minimised when people are operating in areas of their strength.
- *Move on.* Give millennials a chance to pause to unpack failure, but help them to leave the past behind as it cannot be changed.

☐ Do not correct in a condescending way

If millennials fail what then? Millennials like most of us can be defensive because they desire to achieve and do not like to be corrected. Most of us like millennials are very much like strawberries that bruise easily and respond to criticism with anger, guarded behaviour, offense, resentment and shift in responsibilities. Millennials like most of us want to receive compliments rather than being told when doing poorly. To disarm this defensiveness, it is best practice to be positive when correcting and avoid conflict with a proactive response. After all, like most of us, millennials respond to those who care enough to listen to them; attempt to understand them and when they are assured of one's continued commitment to the relationship. Therefore, smart people do not correct millennials when they do fail in a condescending way. Suffice to say, there may be a time and place for tough love. This might come in the form of direct and honest feedback. But when the time comes to deliver tough news, you have to be mindful that even then you should first explain the 'why'. You have to explain why something is so critical for them to understand or do in order to give them context. This will help millennials to see why they need to pay attention, listen and be mindful even if you, as so often happen, are overreaching

in your efforts to correct or avoid failure. So, when millennials want to know why you 'suddenly out of the blue' take a tougher position, you have to remind yourselves to suspend snap judgement. As we have already discussed earlier on, in supervising situations, you should be particularly careful not to confuse the word 'why' as a reflection of resistance which could give rise to a snap judgement or even worse, create a conflict situation that weakens the effort to correct.

☐ Improve work ethic

To convert millennials' imagination and creativity into success requires a certain attitude from you if you are desirous to encourage millennials to up their game and take their imagination and creativity to the next level. In the aforesaid paragraphs, we have highlighted some competencies that will shape and guide our attitudes towards millennials with regard to bolstering their imagination and creativity. But this is only one side of the equation. The other side is millennial's work ethic. Success in innovation and creativeness depends on a strong work ethic. Any discussion on the core competencies that are required to advance millennials creativity and innovativeness will be incomplete without touching on how work ethic could be instilled in millennials. This is an important element as work ethic is not something we are born with. Work ethic is a learned behaviour. Work ethic is a personal value and must be taught and modelled daily (Jenkins 2017:136). Within this context, you have to help millennials to improve their work ethic, the details of which may differ in quality from profession to profession. But, essentially, what you have to instil in millennials is that they have to show up on time, dressed as per the part, and with positivity and enthusiasm; that they should go above and beyond to add value and should offer more than what is required; and that they should be honest and offer cheerful and friendly service regardless of the others. These are essentially the universal qualities that characterise someone with a good work ethic. Encouraging these

elements ought to be part of any programme that aims to promote innovation and creativity, as essential prerequisites for competitive success. Here are a few tips how you can help millennials to instil a stronger work ethic and execute these beautiful attributes (Jenkins 2017:137):

- Clearly communicate the expected work ethic. This may differ from profession to profession and business to business.
- Demonstrate the right work ethic daily. You cannot expect the millennials to do what you are not doing yourselves.
- Connect work ethic values to the bigger picture and the overarching why!
- Let the customer or the person(s) that are being served define the work ethic. In other words, the people being served should determine the behaviour and attitude that millennials should demonstrate (e.g. customer, patient, citizen, etc.). If the people who are being served need reliability, then the product or service required ought to be rendered when/where needed. If they demand quality, then everything must be done to produce or render a high-quality product or service. If honesty is important, then integrity must be deployed in actions and in every interaction. Likewise, if professionalism is highly regarded, the dressing, action and preparedness ought to be professional.

These steps will only be efficient if you remind yourselves of the following. Firstly that, you have to own your own work ethic if you want to be of assistance to millennials. If your attitude to work ethic is weak, millennials will not take you seriously. Secondly, work ethic is only powerful if each person is 100% in control of it. That means each person sets their own bar and decides how to work. It has to be reiterated for the sake of millennials and yourself that work ethic is like a muscle that should be exercised, a personal value that takes time to become part of a person's very fibre. It is after all not a sprint but a marathon that requires patience. Thirdly, work ethic is ultimately a reflection of who you are; our character is in contemporary language an integral part of

our personal *brand*. Those who view their work ethic as the product they deliver will build a strong brand that will be recognised for its regularity and steadiness. Therefore, you have to yourself develop a strong work ethic that will not only withstand the demanding and high flux conditions that prevail but will act as a good example for the millennials.

■ Competency #7: Commit to collaborative communication

Communication today is a tangled web of varying styles and preferences. Some call, some email, whilst others prefer text messaging even when they sit next to you. Not many will differ from the notion that the evolving technologies are wreaking havoc on our communication style and preferences. There has indeed never been a greater divide between the various communication channels than there is today. When is a face-to-face chat better than a call? When is a text message better than an email? When is slack better than Skype? These are the day-to-day, or rather moment-to-moment decisions we have to make. But this is not what this section is about. Neither is this section about how to bridge the communication gap. This section is much more. The discussion in this section is about the core competencies or at least some of the most relevant and needed competencies that you have to master to establish a collaborative communication style with millennials. We are using the term, 'collaborative' mindfully because we are of the view that we have to develop an engaging style of communication that attracts and holds millennials attention and secondly a style of communication that is such, that millennials want to willingly keep communicating. The core competencies are therefore about how to communicate with the unfocussed millennials and how to create a communication style that encourages greater collaboration and continued engagement in an age of multitasking, fake news and ambiguities.

Let's start at the beginning. Multitasking and ambiguity are the Kryptonite or the 'alien powers' that have the potential of depriving the 'superman' millennials from his or her 'powers'. Ambiguity is a Kryptonite because millennials, though they like to be autonomous, also thrive when given clear and succinct guidance, directions and instructions. They get easily confused when directions are ambiguous, and they feel that their autonomy is defiled and feel their desire to achieve success diminishes. They have desire or high regard for achievement, it is important to them, and they want to, *have* to, know exactly what they have to do to be successful and make their mark in this life. They have a fear of making a wrong decision or exercising the wrong option. They would rather not make a decision or take an important step at all than making the wrong decision. Therefore, their desire for autonomy could evoke fear when they are confronted with ambiguity. Directing and clear communication are therefore core competencies to engage with millennials successfully. The second Kryptonite, namely multitasking, could make the former even worse. The reason being, that multitasking, that is a known characteristic of millennials, may cause them to be unfocussed, which in turn creates even further havoc when instructions are ambiguous. Basically, distraction and unclarity are not the parents of certainty and clarity. Whichever way, multitasking is a reality that ought to be dealt with. Millennials value doing many different things at the same time. In fact, millennials claim that their ability to multitask gives them an advantage over older persons. It is their true conviction that they can do more than older generations because they understand technology and can access information at speed. It is therefore common amongst millennials to listen to the radio, whilst watching TV and by the way, also studying. Millennials therefore are making a big deal about their ability to multitask. But contrary to what millennials might think, they have a hard time to stay focussed and engaged with a task, especially tasks they have no interest in. The question is then 'How do you create a more engaging communication' that ensures their collaboration. This is indeed a big challenge because you cannot

control their attention. Even if you succeed in getting their willingness to put down or even better, to power down their devices, that does not mean you will win their attention. On the contrary, by insisting that they shut down their devices will result in earning their resentment and the label of being irrelevant and outdated (Jenkins 2017:201).

What compounds this reality is that in a world where more and more competing sources of information and various parties are communicating, or at least trying to communicate, attention can no longer be expected and continued collaboration and engagement must be earned. Because the only thing you control and own is the message or the information and the delivery thereof. Therefore, you have to master core competencies to earn attention and this has very much to do with your attitude when communicating. Admittingly, there are other threshold competencies of a technical nature that is devices used, presentation skills, etc. that are also important but are not within the scope and purpose of this section. In this section, we concentrate on the following core competencies that impact on our attitude and general behaviour when communicating. The competencies are worded as follows:

- commit to ongoing dialogue
- allow them to challenge you
- soliciting self-evaluation and criticism
- embrace transparency
- be prepared to repeat-repeat-repeat
- consider the communication preferences of the other
- prioritise face-to-face communication.

Surely there are indeed many more to be added to this list. But according to our observation, these core competencies will go a long way to facilitate collaboration and ensure better engagement from the cohort that is quite unfocussed and even disengaged when they are not enticed and stimulated. Regrettably, we have to be brief and admit that the discussion may fall short of what is considered a detailed analysis.

☐ Commit to an ongoing dialogue

Perhaps one of the most essential competencies to master is to create an ongoing dialogue about millennial needs, what you think they should do and their progress (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:71). Ongoing dialogue is vital in motivating millennials and to keep them engaged. Victor Vroom (Espinoza & Ukleja 2016:69) suggests that millennials, like most other people, are motivated and stay engaged by how much they want something and the likelihood of them getting it. This is what Vroom termed the 'expectancy theory'. There are three components. Firstly, the expectancy that a certain amount of effort will result in a certain level of performance. Secondly, the expectation that if the task is performed successfully, the desired outcome will follow. Thirdly, the expectancy that the value of reward is worth the effort. In all three instances, ongoing dialogue ought to bring clarity and further structure to the expectation. Ongoing dialogue is therefore key to manage the expectations of millennials with regard to concrete objectives that they have to meet; what the check-in points are; how the check-in points are structured, if at all; and when the deadline is and how will the deadline be tracked. To communicate these issues on an ongoing basis will require engaging methods in order to incite and keep the millennial's ongoing attention. Smart people use the following competencies to facilitate continued engagement and collaboration:

- *Tell a story*. Stories are still a timeless way of captivating people.
- *Ask questions*. Questions are inherently engaging. Ask them about their weekend. Ask them, about the project they are working on.
- *Use images*. Humans and particularly millennials think in images. Take a cue from Instagram's success and supplement the message with appealing images.
- *Be shocking*. The unexpected and surprising will attract their attention.
- *Simplicity*. Simplify the message to its bare essentials.

- *Co-create*. Ask attendees to help shape the content.
- *Frequent feedback*. Quick and frequent feedback methods create a space for transparent dialogue that breeds trust.

☐ Allow them to challenge the status quo

Inviting or soliciting input from others and allowing them to challenge the status quo are the most sure way of improving engagement and collaboration. If millennials in an organisation have permission to challenge the status quo, everybody wins (Jenkins 2017:258). This would require a listening culture to be developed. Because it will be quite detrimental to ask them their opinions if you are not serious about hearing them. Millennials, if they are asked for opinion, they most often will give their opinion with conviction and without reservation. In the Espinoza study (2016:79), it has been established that one of the quickest ways to turn millennials off, is to invite their participation and not really mean it. You are better of being autocratic than faking an interest in hearing millennials' perspectives on the status quo. When you do solicit their inputs, you do not have to see it as a weakness on your side, nor would they. Furthermore, collaborative communication means interconnectedness. Remember, millennials are famous for asking 'Why?' With earlier generations, the communication was quite a monologue. If the boss said an employee had to jump, he or she would simply ask: 'How high?' Millennials are changing direction in this regard, so encourage them to ask the key question. But even better, deal with the 'why' proactively. Creating an environment that does not shut down when the status quo is challenged, but rather encourages mutually beneficial 'feedback' and 'feed forward' are therefore important competencies to have.

☐ Soliciting self-review

Soliciting feedback from millennials should be done in a multidirectional way. Millennials are pushing for a multidirectional

model not only for general communication but also when it comes to review performance. You have to be mindful that performance review cannot be all about the millennials. In the past, annual reviews have followed a linear model, starting at the top. More often than not the employee's performance was the focus. This is now changing. As much as you expect millennial employees to be evaluated, so too should management and leadership's performances be evaluated. What is also changing is the 'directional orientation' of the review process. Nowadays, the best practice is self-review. This applies to millennials, as well as managers and leaders in the organisation. Self-review has benefits for both the employee as well as management. Soliciting self-review has according to Elliot (Jenkins 2017:58) three benefits: Firstly, personal self-review is more critical. When evaluating one's own performance one tends to be more straightforward and to the point. Secondly, self-review promotes ownership. After spending time reflecting upon one's own performance, a person is more likely to take ownership of his or her mistakes and shortcomings. Thirdly, all those involved in the review process are more relaxed as self-assessments are tabled for review, which makes it easier for the others to affirm the positives and offer advice and encouragement in the areas highlighted as weaknesses. This makes the review process a much more engaging and pleasant process that fosters collaboration after the review(s) has been done.

☐ Embrace transparency

One concept millennials will be looking for to establish whether they will engage and collaborate is the idea of transparency. Transparency is something that should be pursued in ways big or small. Transparency should be weaved into everything you do. By embracing transparency, you also embrace a more democratic model of communication. The conventional wisdom used to be, 'he who holds the information holds the power' (Ubl & Arbit 2017:132). But with the emergence of the Internet, millennials

have access to information and therefore hold some power to influence more than ever before. The playfield is much more levelled nowadays. It does not matter if you are the 60-year-old Chief Executive Officer or a 24-year-old millennial, you have something to say because you have access to a wide range of information. Secondly, transparency also leads to interconnectedness as all stakeholders can see and value their respective roles and contributions. Remember the discussion on the importance of 'Why'. Thirdly, by embracing transparency, open communication and feedback are encouraged. Finally, transparency offers you an opportunity to be authentic, to share your ideas and show that you are not hiding any information or have a hidden agenda (Ubl & Arbit 2017:133).

☐ Be prepared to repeat

If you think that you have communicated what the expectations, the deadlines and rewards are, you have not. You have to be mindful that millennials can be unfocussed and their multitasking can aggravate any ambiguity that has slipped in. Millennials have to hear the message three to four times more often than what you may think. So, the best practice is to remind yourselves that you should repeat-repeat-repeat. For instance, you have to be continuously on the lookout or put it playfully, trying to catch employees or millennials that you relate to, doing well and tell them so!! If you feel that you are not being heard, one simple habit to learn is to be more mindful of the medium that would bring better results. For example, if someone drops in, drop in on them. If someone calls, call them back. If someone emails, email back. If someone texts… Getting the point?

☐ Consider the communication preference of the other

This brings us to the penultimate competency that should be mastered in order to facilitate collaborative communication

with millennials. That is to consider how the person on the other side wants you to communicate with them. In principle, you should communicate in the way they prefer. We suggest this is more about respect than practical convenience. We often, admittedly, communicate with others in the way we want to be communicated with. But the need for collaborative communication and the countless options for communication, are forcing us to be more adaptive. The Jenkins study (2017:45) concludes that age is closely linked to communication preferences, so the cohort that you engage with can be a useful cue to which form of communication would be most efficient and impactful. The Jenkins study (2017:45) uses the following examples as illustrations. If a millennial wants to communicate with a Baby Boomer, the millennial should consider making a phone call or opt for a face-to-face meeting. If that Baby Boomer wants to get in touch with the millennial, texting or using instant messaging may be most effective, definitely not a phone call. This would require of all to be adaptive and considerate. Once people have connected, they can negotiate how communication should take place moving forward. One last observation. Millennial's high reliance on technology has resulted in a deterioration of other interpersonal skills. Though millennials may have good reason, there is still great value in face-to-face communication; and if leveraged appropriately, it can forge deep connections. Admittingly, it requires the right attitude from both yourselves and millennials to make a face-to-face connection pleasant and effective.

☐ Prioritise face-to-face communication

The Jenkins study (2017:145) has concluded that for many millennials, offline especially face-to-face communication are archaic and outdated since mass communication via a text or tweet can happen in a few thumb flicks. The study found that it is alarming how many opportunities millennials miss because of their lack of face-to-face connection. Perhaps the answer is then in a blended communication, skillset of *'high-tech and high touch'*

(Jenkins 2017:146) is depending on the focus person's preference. But when face-to-face communication is the preferred way, then all, millennials and non-millennials, for the sake of collaboration, respect for others, and your own efficiency, have to focus on a few rules to elevate the influence and effectiveness of face-to-face communication. Firstly, be always prepared. Face-to-face communication deserves forethought. Before a face-to-face meeting, it is important to gather your thoughts and establish the purpose and desired outcome. Secondly, be present. Face-to-face connection deserves full attention. Stay focussed on the conversation at hand. Thirdly, be attentive. Face-to-face communication deserves full participation. Great conversation is like a tennis match. One person serves up his or her thoughts, and the other reciprocates. Pay close attention to the words, body language and tone of the voice. But remember, be concise and respectful to allow the other person to be in the match and be able to return the serve. Otherwise the conversation develops into a squash game, with you 'hitting a wall'. Smart people enjoy a fair game of tennis by being respectful and appreciative of the opportunity to exchange ideas. With the focus on 'exchange' and with the mindfulness that one is never too old to win a set and gain something valuable. As Ralph Waldo Emerson (Jenkins 2017:147) once said: 'In my walks, every man I meet is my superior in some way and in that I learn from him'. This is a great advice. No matter who we meet face-to-face, know that they can teach us something. Respect their perspectives, appreciate their experience, and learn from it. Face-to-face communication remains a critical skillset and if correctly used with the right attitude, it can be an important and valued element of any person's *brand,* and critical skillset facilitates collaborative communication.

With this we conclude our discussion on *The Fourth Generation* as a major world trend; the innate character traits and values of the millennials as a social cohort and the competencies needed to significantly increase the performance capabilities required to converse, relate and partner with millennials. What now remains

to be done is to collapse or converge the competencies befitting to the changing conditions of the three megatrends that have been elucidated in the last three chapters into a structured and integrated whole. Once this has been done, we have to reduce these competencies or most befitting capacities suitable to the challenges, to unity and order, by establishing a learned pattern of behaviour or *set of habits*. Habits that are the most susceptible to the changing conditions and most capable of integrating the set of competencies that have been determined by the stated conditions of the changing circumstance and the overarching challenge to continue prospering as the new conditions unfold. This then is the purpose of the next chapter to follow. But before we go any further, let's return to the allegory of John who decided to compete in the Abbott World Marathon Majors that we have *laid out in Chapter 1*. This will refresh our memory and once more contextualise the three parts that constitute the broad outline of the last three chapters, and where we find ourselves at this stage. The allegory goes as follows. For John to run a marathon, he has to acquire certain *competencies* to be a good athlete. John has to gain the physiological, biological and mental capacities suitable to run a marathon race. Competencies such as, having maximal oxygen uptake, developing a running economy, building slow-twitch muscle fibres that are better suitable for endurance and master a strong training ethic... getting the point! But for John to go to every training session with his coach, with a list of 35 odd competencies, or however many, that needed to be ticked, is not a practical idea. So, John's coach called him and explained to him that he must learn certain very specific *habits* that can over time up his competencies and increase performance. John's coach then told him to learn the following habits. Firstly, to be disciplined and be on time at each training session. Secondly to 'find purpose', in other words knowing why John is coming to the training sessions and why John wants to run a marathon. John's coach during the training session also explained to him the important habit of managing stress during training, or what is also called 'growth promoting stress' or aiming for the 'sweat

spot' by not overexerting himself during the training sessions. His coach also explained to John the importance of practicing 'calm conversation' because when pain sets in during a hard run, emotionally charged thoughts have both physical and mental consequences. These habits, John's coach explained, will, if duly mastered, eventually come naturally and automatically and no longer use conscious efforts to engage in. John's coach also explained to him why these habits will help him to bring 'unity' and 'order' to all the myriad competencies or skills that John needs for the challenge. But then John's very experienced coach gave him some very 'seasoned' advice. The coach said to John that there will be times when John might lose sight of what he is aiming at, and there might be times when he will reach a 'plateau' in his training and will begin to lack confidence and motivation. John's coach also said to him that there will be times when John's good habits will falter. Like his habit of eating healthy foods will be weak when John is at a barbeque. There will be a time when John's habit of doing stretching and warmups before a session will not be strong because he will be in a hurry to get done with the training session. There may also be times when John notwithstanding his good intentions will develop bad habits like not recovering on certain days because John has developed a 'dependency' and is now a 'runaholic' that abuses running as a means to reduce the stress at work. John's coach then explained to him the importance of *'virtues'*. The coach explained to John how 'virtues' could help John remain 'steady' and 'regular' in his resolve and actions. John's coach explained to him the virtues of self-discipline, proportionality, self-differentiation, humility, tolerance and synergy. Virtues that have the power and capacity to help John become a marathon athlete of distinctive excellence, having great command over all the competencies needed for success.

Let's now return to the discussion at present. The importance and the list of core competencies required have been dealt with in the last three chapters. We are now at the epicentre. In Chapter 5, we will elucidate seven smart habits that if you master

them properly, will integrate the myriad competencies and bring unity and order in a way that you develop these competencies in a constant and continued manner so that the competencies become a natural part of who you are. In Chapter 6, dealing with virtues, we will identify and outline those smart virtues that, like in John's case, would help you to develop greater steadiness and regularity in your character, behaviour; values, etc. so that you remain focussed, resolute and working to become *truly smart and has the capacity to reach exceptional prosperity.* More about this in Chapter 6. Let's now commence with Chapter 5 by first collapsing all the myriad competencies having been determined by the three megatrends into 10, whereafter we will define and outline the seven habits that will wire our minds in a specific pattern in order to prosper and flourish under the unfolding conditions and be truly happy and content.

Habits for a changing world

■ My brand[1]

John, the marathon athlete in our allegory, very soon after he joined his new coach to train for the upcoming marathon race in the Abbott World Marathon Majors, complained to his coach. John said to his coach that there is so much to do and think of and there is never enough time. John complained that he feels pressurised and hassled by all the technical details of the myriad of competencies and skills that he has to learn and master in the small space of time available to prepare for the marathon. 'I've attended training camps with sport psychologists, dieticians, physiotherapists and running economy gurus and try to come to terms with so many new concepts like positive

1. Some elements in this chapter are taken from Walters. J., 2018, 'Theoconomy: An ethical paradigm for discernible economic growth – A global ethical perspective', Doctor of Philosophy in Ethics thesis, Faculty of Theology, North-West University, with Prof. J.M. Voster as promoter, Prof. A.L. Rheeder as co-promoter and Prof. J. Venter as assistant promoter. The chapter represents a substantial reworking of the relevant facets from the doctoral thesis.

mental attitude, Vo2max, high intensity interval training', John said. 'I don't know where to start', complained John. John's seasoned coach then called him aside and explained to him that he should focus on mastering very specific habits that will help him settle down. John's coach said to him that if he duly mastered these habits, he will eventually make it a part of his lifestyle and the myriad of competencies required for success will come more naturally and automatically and he would no longer use conscious effort to engage in these habits. The coach also explained to him why these habits will help him bring 'unity' and 'order' to the myriad competencies or skills that John needs for the marathon race. John's seasoned coach gave him some invaluable advice. The coach said to him that he must make these habits a part of his normal lifestyle. 'This must become part of your *"Brand"'* the coach said and continued to explain that he ought to place his own 'mark' on these habits. The habits must become a part of who you are as a person. The coach said to John that he should not resort to shortcut strategies such as power strategies, positive attitude, intermittent meditation, etc. 'These are useful' the coach said, but they are quick, easy techniques that may work in the short term. What the coach recommended is that John acquires habits that would change his character strength fundamentally because the challenge requires a strong character with true motives and desires deep in his mind. The coach then explained to John that if he analyses the list of core competencies he will see a startling pattern emerge and that there are keys to what is befitting to the challenges ahead. These keys will unlock the layers of inner potential within John and these keys, if duly used, would open up the doors to new potential and new qualities that John can rely on to achieve success and be the best he can be on race day.

This then is essentially the approach we are following in this chapter on habits. If we closely look and analyse the unfolding trends and the core competencies and qualities required, we will discover that there is indeed a startling pattern emerging in the

context of the competencies most befitting to the unfolding trends. The pattern can be reduced to the following:

- being well-connected
- embracing openness and diversity
- being authentic and creating unique experiences
- being creative; agile; resolute and emphatic to which is given the acronym 'CARE'
- have a clear vision of why
- belief in one's capacity to succeed
- having a teachable spirit
- commit to collaborative communication
- support and nourish personal health and wellbeing
- harness technologies.

From our analysis, the myriad of conditions and the required responses to the unfolding trends could be condensed into the aforesaid 10 core competencies. To simplify it even further, the unfolding trends could be summarised in the following word narratives: velocity, uncertainty, opportunities, diversity, integration, self-realisation, a-dogmatic, interconnectedness, hard work and universality. Admittedly, you the reader may add to this list or come up with a completely different set of narratives. But from our perspective, these narratives offer a very specific lens or paradigm through which we believe you ought to develop your perceptional analysis and principles. From our perspective, these are the *keys* that we believe are most befitting to the changing conditions and would open up the layers of inner potential deep within each of us. Admittedly, these *keys* are conditional and circumstantial as they are most befitting to the changing trends and can change course in due time. However, we believe in bringing unity and order to these competencies. You have to develop a very specific pattern or tenor of conduct that purports your individual perceptional analysis or paradigm of the future. Essentially what we are advocating is that each person has to make these competencies their own by placing their 'mark' on it in a personal way that has definitive and specific appearance of the person's character or representing the persons 'brand' in

the most contemporary vernacular. In doing this, there are essentially two paths to follow. You can integrate these competencies or bring unity and order to the myriad of competencies by following certain quick-fix techniques that change personal attitudes and behaviours. The basic thrust thereof can include quick-fix solutions such as influencing techniques, power strategies, communication skills, effective listening and writing, methods to win friends and influence people, etc. This list is truly endless. Following this path would mean that success becomes more a function of personality, attitude, public image, skills and other techniques that captivate and lubricate the processes of human interaction and behaviour. The focus here is that a person's 'attitude determines a person's altitude'. Let us be clear here. We are not suggesting that these quick-fix solutions in the field of influence strategies, positive thinking, public debating and profiling are not beneficial and not sometimes essential for success. You may pick up these quick-fix solutions and make it part of your behaviour and master it in ways that make it very much an integral part of your behaviour and attitude. But these traits, we believe have no permanent worth in facing the trends unfolding today that require strong character, resolve and resilience. What is required, we suggest, is deep integrity and fundamental character qualities that bring forth deeply rooted and principle-centred motives and responses which goes much deeper than the quick-fix techniques. For instance, integrity and working towards synergistic solutions to human interconnectedness can give some life to techniques such as effective listening as a first step to the more fundamental emphatic listening ability.

Our approach is therefore to integrate certain principles, based on our particular perceptional analysis of the nature of the unfolding trends and the core competencies needed to respond effectively, into a very specific set of habits. These habits would change more than our individual attitudes, changing our own character and motives, so that we can make the competencies our own and place our 'mark' or 'take' on it. Ultimately, as these

habits change your character and motives, your personal 'brand' will resonate characteristics that are most susceptible to your enduring prosperity. The 7 habits that we have outlined below embody many of the fundamental principles for human prosperity. As such these habits represent the internalisation of correct principles to respond effectively to the changing trends and are worthy of reward. These habits are principle-centred and are rooted deep in a human's telic nature and essence. In this way, the following habits are regarded as secondary principles that provide a circumscribed space for human development, prosperity, happiness and success. The 7 habits required to be *smart* and fully equipped for the challenges lying ahead are:

1. be awake – act or be acted upon
2. seize the moment
3. take an interest in others
4. embrace diversity and openness
5. try to understand first, and then to be understood
6. be parsimonious and live with moderation
7. practice self-care.

Let us start at the beginning.

■ Habit #1: Be awake

■ 'Act or be acted upon'

Seth Godin once wrote: 'There is no normal. Simply the relentless cycle of change' (Godin 2018). This is perhaps a very befitting description of the circumstance of the time. As we have seen in Chapters 2–4, the unfolding trends are continuously creating new stimulus that requires a very befitting response in order to stay ahead of the waves of change. Fifty years ago, perhaps it was easier to navigate the world, getting ahead and riding the waves. As we have articulated earlier, the baseline for success was much more straightforward: Work hard. Play by the rules. Stay loyal and keep your head down and focus on the task in front of you. In the same vein, the status quo was not always challenged, as

that was left to the leaders of the time. But today much of that has changed. As Burchard (2017:6) argues, 'today for many the baseline feels distant, blurred, almost unknowable'. Gone are the days when a specific response to a new stimulus was more predictable and the expectations around us were 'fixed'. Nowadays, given the velocity of change, the upsurge in information, views, perspectives and prejudices, everything feels more chaotic and in a state of flux. On top of that our work environment is not as simple or siloed as it used to be and everything is more interconnected and intertwined and subject to change and review. We therefore agree with Burchard's observation that it is more and more difficult to figure anything out and to get settled in a rhythm or pattern. The consequence is that we 'just keep adapting, because tomorrow everything changes again' (Burchard 2017:6).

We, therefore, based on our assessment of the new trends unfolding and in lieu of the changes in the baseline and the general environment as aforesaid, have concluded that the first habit to be mastered is to become habitually 'switched on', 'tuned on' and 'awake'. Differently said, we have to be always switched on and turned on and ready and able to adjust to suit the changing circumstances and proactively respond to new stimuli. This is an inevitable part of the highly interconnected world where game-changing disruptions and innovations have unavoidable ripple effects across the world of work, industries and even lifestyle. Take for instance, the devastating effect of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on our present-day lifestyle, human interaction, and the economy and trade. Those nations who have been awake and responsive had a much lower mortality rate and the economic disruption was more manageable. Those people with a compromised immune system and those who live in unhygienic conditions or are generally physically weak and have a poor vitality were more susceptive to COVID-19. Essentially what this means is that we have to continuously reinvent ourselves. We therefore have to improve our response, vitality and lifestyle all the time. We therefore agree with Shorkend and

Golding (2018:51) that if we are not switched on, tuned in and adjust to suit to what is happening around us, we will undoubtedly be left behind and even perish. We will live and die depending upon the choices that we make and the attention that we pay to the external and internal environment and how we individually and also collectively respond and adapt. But if we are awake and ready to adapt, disruption will not be really disruptive, but only be constant changes experienced as part of daily existence. Then our responses to changes will bring about greater self-realisation, fulfilment, stability, tranquillity and peace. As Winston Churchill, the United Kingdom Prime Minister (1940–1945), cited by Shorkend and Golding (2018:52) so aptly put it: 'To improve is to change. To be perfect is to change often'. In this context, to be awake and switched on is a dynamic shift in consciousness and an appreciation of reality that had previously been unrealised. To be awake and switched on helps us to discover the fact that underneath all apparent differences and changes lies a fundamental potential and that all forms of existence arise from pure potentiality. How we see and respond to this potentiality depends on a person's own personal paradigm. What is therefore essentially required is a well-rooted sense of awareness where we proactively choose the purpose(s) and principle(s) to live by. If not, we will fill the hole with the lifestyle, views, values, criteria and prejudices of others. With the result that a person loses awareness and as Covey (1989:305) asserts: 'become like grovelling animals who live primarily for survival and propagation'. People who exist at that level, Covey argues, 'aren't living; they are being lived. They are reacting, unaware of the unique endowments that lie dormant and undeveloped within' (Covey 1989:305). In other words, if we wait to act, we will be acted upon. But if we act proactively with greater purpose and principle-centredness we can elevate our lives by conscious endeavour. Then we can control our entire environment and if we have no control thereof, we remain self-aware and look at the circumstances with our basic identity and character intact and with the strength to decide within ourselves how all are going to

affect us. Notwithstanding what happened to us, or the stimulus and our response to it, we remain free and empowered to choose that response. We then have more liberty and more internal power to exercise our options. Only then, we can see within ourselves the layers and layers of potential that we can realise at our own pace and speed. What however is fundamental to this awakening is that the process uncovering the layers of potential is not a quick-fix process. Some may focus on developing techniques such as good time management, effective listening, deal-making, etc., but this would be like cramming our way through life. Sometimes we get by, perhaps conclude a great deal or get a promotion, but if we do not pay the price every day, we never achieve the mastery of good qualities of character and becoming virtuous and excellent through learning new virtues. As Covey (1989:22) puts it so aptly, we can learn easy techniques that may work in the short term but these secondary characteristics alone, according to Covey, have no permanent value in long-term relationships. Eventually, short-term success will be replaced by true motives that come to the surface because there is no deep integrity and fundamental character strength to conceive and create a befitting response that is lasting and enduring. Is the only answer then to work on our behaviour and attitudes? No! We could try harder, be more diligent, resolute and double our speed but our efforts would only succeed in getting us to experience a short burst of satisfaction or even worse lead us to the wrong destination altogether. Likewise, we might work on our attitude by thinking more positively but the outcome will only be short-lived, but perhaps we might not care as we experience a 'spike' in happiness. Attempting to change external attitudes and behaviours does very little good in the long run if we remain ignorant of the 'fountain' from which it springs forth. What then is the way to go?

The way to go is this: We have to habitually realise that we all think the way we see things is as they are. In other words, that we are objective and therefore free of prejudice. But this is not the case. As Covey (1989:28) explains it, 'we see the world, not as it

is, but as we are'. In other words, we see the world as we have been conditioned to see it. In fact, when we are 'awake' and try to communicate what we see, we in effect reveal ourselves, our perceptions, our beliefs and our worldview. This is what Covey described as our 'paradigm' (Covey 1989:23). We prefer also the term 'worldview'. It is very important to consider *the lens* we use to look at the world *and* the world we see because the lens itself determines the colours through which we see the world (Covey 1989:17). Our worldview and then our paradigm is the frame of reference. Broadly, it is the way we 'see' the world – not visually but with respect to perception, understanding and interpretation (Covey 1989:23). However, do our worldview and our attitudes and behaviour interlink? Our attitudes are our human way of thinking and behaving. A person's attitude decides the course of their thinking and the formulation of their guiding principles and norms. It determines how they project their ideals and hopes and how they live and form relationships. Attitude directs their engagement with science and culture, how they indulge in economics and politics and how they fulfil their everyday tasks. On the other hand, a person's attitude is shaped by a life and a worldview, a *paradigm.* The roots of this paradigm lie deep in a person's religious conviction, philosophy, ideology or an existential disposition. Our deepest beliefs determine our attitude to life and our attitude shapes the way we live and the ideals we have. Likewise, the ethical norms that we live by, grow from an ethical theory, which in turn is determined by a certain *worldview* or *paradigm.*

For our purpose, a simple way to understand *paradigms* or our *worldview* is to see them as maps. 'As a map is simply an explanation of certain aspects of the territory', Covey (1989:23) argues that 'the map is not the territory'. That is exactly what a paradigm is. It is a theory, an explanation, model, point of view deduced from personal observations and experiences of something else. We each carry two kinds of maps with us in our minds: maps of *the way things are*, or *realities,* and maps of *the way things ought to be*, our values (Covey 1989:24). We measure

everything we experience against these mental maps. We rarely question their accuracy; we do not even realise that we have them. We simply take it for granted that the way we see things is the way they really are or the way they should be. And as already eluded earlier, our attitudes and behaviours grow out of those assumptions. It is therefore imperative to realise that the way we see things is the source of the way we think and the way we act. With the result that you may be awake, switched on and tuned in and adjusting to suit, but the question is to what? Our efforts may only succeed in getting us to the wrong place faster. This brings us to the second habit that is very much related to the first. If we learn, confirm and act, we have to begin with the end in mind. In other words, have absolute clarity of our purpose in life, vision, values and goals – or in most contemporary language to *live our brand! This is Habit #2*.

But before we jump to Habit #2, we would just like to stay with the first habit for a longer while. Being awake and tuned in, is very important and depending on one's paradigm or future identity could be very beneficial for oneself and society. Firstly, smart people who are awake and tuned in are proactive people, one who are solutions to problems not problems themselves. They use their resources and initiatives in a responsible way in the attainment of the *good life*. They act in a responsible way and as the word literally describes, have the ability to choose a response – hence, 'response ability', and do not wait until they are commanded to do something. Secondly, most tuned-in people have critical engagements with new and old ideas and do not hesitate to challenge the status quo or critically uncover the 'why' to their life challenges whether menial or otherwise (Theodoropoulos 2017). They also argue with themselves (Levinson 2012) and work on themselves (Harris 2019) without telling themselves that everything will be easy (Todorovic 2019). Though they are permanently tuned in to question the status quo (Levinson 2012), they do focus on the message and not the messenger. The consequential effect of this conduct is that smart-tuned in people are like the proverbial early bird that

catches the biggest juicy worm. They tend to see what others overlook (Stanley 2001:239). They see useful information that other people cannot see or do not see (Grace 2013) and draw accurate conclusions from that information. They also design useful goals that take advantage of the information uncovered (Grace 2013) and create efficient and effective plans. Furthermore, having the alertness and consciousness, they develop precise intentions upfront and seek clarity continuously (Burchard 2017:5). This results in the fact that they can see and connect the dots and take control over their own environment as well as quickly adjust without waiting for others to tell them what to do (Stanley 2001:93). Essentially, smart-awakened people seek out opportunities long before others and become actual collectors and capitalisers of opportunities (Stanley 2001:211). Finally, smart-awakened persons are morally conscious people and not merely existing, unconscious and headless, but rather fully alive (Grace 2013) with a great sense of responsibility and a strong value ego-system (Shorkend & Golding 2018:22). All in all, people who are switched on and flow equate with awesome economic success, output and prosperity. This then is *Habit #1: Be awake and Act or be acted upon.* In other words, be proactive with the power of clarity in our peripheral vision.

■ Habit #2: Seize the moment

■ 'Create *wow* moments'

From our analysis of the unfolding trends, it is evidently clear that the velocity of change and the world of flux that are unfolding precipitates that we must start thinking in moments. This is also evident in the growing emphasis on extended experiences and personal and customised experiences that differentiate the exceptional from the ordinary. We believe that change is constant and inevitable, so we may as well let it be exciting and an opportunity for creating exceptional experiences rather than allow it to create fear and paralysis. By creating exceptional moments filled with fun, laughter and passion, we create

excitement, heightened satisfaction, greater engagement and experiences worth sharing that foster greater relationships with people in our circle of influence but also contain fear, uncertainty and paralysis that makes it possible to unleash greater creativity during times of change. We therefore agree with Shorkend and Golding (2018:203) that moments matter. Moments that create exceptional experiences, heightened levels of satisfaction and lasting impressions on people in our circle of influence, be it friends, family, customers or employees alike, ensure greater engagement. These moments foster loyalty, touch the heartstrings and ultimately create circles of engaged people whether in a family, company or societal context. We must therefore learn to think in moments, to spot those moments that are worthy of special and exceptional attention and investment – those moments that will be remembered and cherished. But this would not come naturally at first. Moments that are worth cherishing often just happen, but that is not always the situation. We need to be more deliberate and intentional in our creation and delivering of the right and best type of moments. We should never be too busy; too tired or too important to seize the moment and to spread joy, happiness and laughter. Nor, should we be too busy to celebrate our own victories and to recognise the victories and success of others in our circle of influence. We have to start savouring the moments of joy and victory. Daisyme (2017:1–5) in his analysis of the 25 habits of successful and extremely happy people, lists as number one, the importance of *savouring the moment.* Daisyme is of the view that the old clichés that say 'we should stop to smell the roses' and 'that we have to savour the little things in life that brings happiness' are of even greater relevance today. This is what Daisyme calls as 'savouring', which is all about paying attention to the beauty of the moment. Moments therefore start to matter again. We have to learn to focus consistently on creating *Wow Moments* for everyone who engages with us. But please do not forget this also applies to you. If we do this correctly, it will directly translate into heightened productivity, release of passion and mental energy, growing engagement with people and tasks, spreading happiness and

contentment, unleashing creativity, and lowered tension and heightened intention.

This aspect is very dear to us personally and forms a very important part of our own personal daily habits and overall disposition. Therefore, we want to share with you, as a reader, a very personal experience of the value of this important aspect of living. One of us recently completed the Abbott World Marathon Major series that consists of marathons in six world cities: in New York, Chicago, Boston, London, Berlin and Tokyo. At the age of 60, a marathon race can be quite a daunting challenge. Apart from following a well-designed training programme and having a list of mantras to repeat continuously, each race has incorporated a *Wow Moment*, by design we should say, in order to keep the focus, motivation and joy flowing continuously. What did I do, you may ask? Very simple! After each race, I visited the tallest building in the city to celebrate my victory. As simple as that! But for me, this was WOW! Today, I have lots of interesting stories to tell, not only about my marathon races but also my *WOW MOMENTS* at the One World Trade Centre, the Shard in London, The Skytree in Tokyo... getting the point? Today when I share with my fellow runners my own unique experiences beyond running itself, people are unsurprisingly very engaged and enthusiastic to find out more about how these Wow Moments have released my own creativity, created fun and happiness when I celebrated my victories, reduced the tension before and during the races and heightened my intent and resolve.

So, Wow Moments do not necessarily require lots of money, but much more imagination and intent. To create *Who Moments* requires that we share something of our soul and most importantly, parts of our accumulated gratitude that is stored within and then most specifically, our love of life – how we experience the beauty of life.

There are indeed many different ways that are unique to each person and circumstance that could be employed in savouring the moment. To help you with creating your own ideas, here are a few tips worth considering:

- *Making things interesting* for people in your circle of influence by creating interesting stories and make something special out of the smallest moments. Dr Travis Bradberry, co-author of *Emotional Intelligence 2.0 and* President at Talent Smart, in his analysis of eight habits of incredibly interesting people (Bradberry 2019:2–4) concluded that being an interesting person is like being a special magnet that draws people together and inspires them. Interesting people tell incredible stories and lead unusual lives. But what makes them so captivating? Dr Bradberry identified the following eight habits. Firstly, they are passionate and devote themselves completely to their cause or ambition. Secondly, they try new things. Interesting people do what interests them most. They avoid the bandwagon. Nothing is more boring than following the bandwagon, and interesting people are adamant on forging their own paths. They also check their egos at the door. An egomaniac is never interesting. Interesting people also share what they discover. They do not share to expose and tap themselves on the back. They share for other people's enjoyment. Furthermore, interesting people are authentic to a fault. They work hard to be always unique in what they do. Originality for them is a virtue.
- *Practice gratitude*, simply by giving thanks for what you have – or counting your blessings and shifting the focus from what you do not have to what you have. Then we have so much more to share.
- *Include play and laughter in our lives.* People often think that play is reserved for kids and childhood and that adulthood is a time of seriousness. However, smart people schedule play and fun into their daily lives because they know that it is important. It relieves stress, strengthens relationships, stimulates creativity, provides novelty and pleasure, helps overcome procrastination, increases productivity and above all, it is contagious. It makes others desire the same or at best begin to join in the play and laughter and by doing so increase engagement and create a good experience (Daringtolivefully, n.d.:12).

- *Increase passion.* To increase influence and engagement we have to spread the passion we have for the work we do or the project we are engaged in.
- *See the good in everything.* Roy Bennet (Moreira 2017:143) once suggested that we have to discipline our minds to think positively, to see the good in every situation and look at the best side of everything or event. Bennett's argument is so valid. To live a good life, a life that gives us contentment, we have to start focussing on the good linked to every situation. Life is not a bed of roses always. When challenges and difficulties arise, we have to look at it as integral to life and that they add meaning to our life. When we deal with hardships positively, we value the good times even more. Having a positive approach to life and seeing the beauty in hardships as well as in victories, enables and empowers us to encourage others as well as ourselves and to remain joyful and of positive spirit.
- *We have to realise that what we enjoy constitutes our abundance and not what we possess.* We can only share with others joyfully what we possess and have in abundance. This extends beyond the material. It is not what we have, but what we enjoy that constitutes our abundance. So, it follows that if we enjoy caring for others passionately, we will have the empathy for others in abundance. If we enjoy Wow Moments whether the smallest or the most extravagant, we have in abundance joy and excitement to share with others. It is therefore not about money but rather the wealth that we accumulate by enjoying or finding pleasure in whatever it might be.
- *We have to love what we do.* When we love what we do, the careers we are following, we are more personable, tenacious and persuasive and achieve greater success. These traits and the consequential success are most valued and desired by others in our circle of influence that could further extend our influence and create engaging moments.
- *Celebrate our own success.* Celebrating one's own success with the necessary humility and gratefulness more often than not allow others to join in the celebration. As it is said, we are on average what our close friends are like and what they

value and enjoy. It therefore follows that people in a particular circle of influence share in the joy and victory. This is essentially circular. If we celebrate other's success, we gain joy and happiness. Therefore, celebrating the success of others is inspiring.

• *Celebrating the success of others and appreciate and recognise them.* By helping others achieve their dreams we will achieve ours. Success of others in our circle of influence is not at our expense but to our benefit. Likewise, celebrating the success of others help us to 'own' our own success. Celebrating others' success, argues Steve Van Remortel, author of *Stop Selling Vanilla Ice Cream* (Van Remortel 2015:1) 'is not only a lot of fun but it motivates you to pursue even greater success'.

These then are a few tips that may be considered in helping create *WoW Moments* for oneself and all other people in our circle of influence.

We want to conclude this brief overview of Habit #2 by sharing a very valuable practice developed by Brendan Burchard (2017:98–103) what he called 'Release Tension, Set Intention'. We personally find this practice very useful. In order to continuously create *Wow Moments* or at least, be mindful of *the next moment* in time, requires an excellent state of mind. Burchard, after years of coaching high performers, has found that the most effective way to help increase the energy in a specific moment, which we believe is congruent with seizing the moment, is to teach them to *master transition.* This is vital to maintain emotional energy and focus, moment to moment. What does Burchard refer to? He is referring to the idea that in reality, though we do not always experience it that way, life comprises a series of transitions. Transition is the space of freedom between activities or moments. For instance, the time space between two interviews or meetings is a transition. The time between two sets of interval training on the athletics track is a transition. Burchard (2017:99) argues that 'if we can get to change the way [we] shift from one activity [read moment] to the next, we can revitalize [*sic*] [our] life'. So, he developed a very simple practice to go from one moment to the next with heightened mental and emotional focus. The

practice is like this: As you move from one major activity to another, from serving one client to the next or taking the next call after the other, close your eyes for a minute or two. Repeat the word *RELEASE* in your mind over and over. Release the tension in your spirit, mind, back and legs. This does not have to take long. Once some of the tension has been released, it does not have to be all your tension, go to the next part: *SET INTENTION.* We then have to ask ourselves what energy do I want to bring into this next activity? We may also ask the question what can we do to bring joy to the next moment – getting the point? In all instances, we have to ask how we can take on the next activity with the greatest excellence. How can I enjoy the process? What can I do to release the conflict? What can I do to make people smile? These are the kinds of questions that will prompt our minds to be more present in the next moment. In a certain way, this practice developed by Burchard is a form of instant meditation or a small moment of prayer. Neuroscientists today continue to discover that people who meditate and submit to prayer have increased connectivity within the brain's attentional networks, as well as between attentional regions and medial frontal regions that are critical to cognitive skills such as maintaining attention, disengaging from distraction and activating the right hemisphere of the brain that is involved with creativity and good feelings, hopefulness and resourcefulness. These effects can last longer than the moment and could even help us to do the next activity with greater excellence (Burchard 2017:102). Let us *try it next time* and let us make this a daily habit. Let us seize the moment and do what is WoW, joyful and brings happiness and true deep-rooted contentment, as a reflection of our gratitude.

◾ Habit #3: Take an interest in others

◾ 'Paradigm of synergistic interdependence'

In the aforesaid analysis of Habits 1–2, the focus has been on those habits which if pursued diligently could create the foundation of true independence. In other words, having self-awareness,

understanding one's purpose and meaning, focus on self-betterment and being able to seize the moment, and creating joy and happiness. Creating the foundation of true *independence* is vital because *interdependence*, in other words, being interrelated and synergised with other human beings and for that matter all of creation which are essential for good living and prosperity, can only be built on true independence. As Covey (1989:185) puts it, 'Private Victory precedes public victory. Algebra comes before calculus'. Interdependence is therefore a choice that only independent, capable and conscious people can make. The focus for now shifts from the 'me-universe' to the 'other-centred universe'. Because life is much more than just serving or bettering oneself. Yes, there is much joy and fulfilment in being the best you, but to experience deep joy in our lives we have to step outside ourselves. Let us be honest, we so often find ourselves caught up in our own small world. We are many a times preoccupied with 'me' and what 'I' like and what others like of 'me' and why things are not going 'my way'. This, in many instances and on many occasions, deprives us from the greatest rewards, both emotionally and financially, that come with a higher purpose grounded in greater empathy and service to others. People who are intent only on focussing on themselves and not transcending their feelings towards a higher meaning by also serving others find that it affects the quality of their self-esteem, joy and contentment, and eventually the quality of their own centred love and their relationships with others. Paradoxically, it is neither one nor the other, that brings joy. If an ambition simply aims to make oneself the 'great one' and not focus on the other too, it is quite meaningless, because if others do not enjoy our hard work what then is the purpose after all? Without loved ones, you have nobody to enjoy success with, share your victories and losses with or simply celebrate your life with. So, to be truly happy and delighted about life, it is crucial that we foster meaningful relationships and be of service to others. On the other hand, we cannot care for others, unless we care for ourselves. We cannot love others if we hate ourselves. We cannot inspire others to grow if we are weak and timid ourselves. Therefore, we are not on this earth just to serve

ourselves nor to only serve others. There ought to be synergy and harmony between the two dimensions.

What then is the way forward? From our perspective, we have to follow a 'middleway'. A 'middleway' that is higher than the other two. The 'middleway' is neither grounded in the one, nor the other, but grounded in working towards synergy. What do we mean by synergy? Simply defined, it means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It means that the relationships which the parts have with each other is a part in and of itself. As Covey (1989:263) puts it 'It is not only a part, but the most catalytic, the most empowering, the most unifying and the most exciting part'. Synergy is everywhere in nature. A child is the product of the synergy between a man and a woman. The essence of synergy is to put different parts of agents with even different values together to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects. Differently said, synergy means a mutually advantageous conjunction of compatibility of distinct participants or elements. This then is the purpose of Habit #3. To neither focus our ambition only on self-betterment nor to ground our ambition in serving others. But to focus our ambition on improving ourselves through self-betterment whilst we achieve sustainable and mutually beneficial results in partnerships and solidarity with others. Differently said, we work at improving our own dignity and wellbeing, whilst we are working towards improving the dignity and wellbeing of others in ways that we achieve sustainable prosperity for all. To do this, we have to work towards our own independence, whilst we forge the humility it takes to be reasonably interdependent. This requires that we think win-win and also take a *genuine* interest in others. This then is the purpose of this habit, in other words, to build mutually beneficial relationships and networks. Admittedly, this is not an easy and simple process and the complexity thereof is well beyond the brevity and confines of this analysis. However, we wish to propose a few principles that may serve as 'lighthouses' along the way. These are a few pointers that may assist in becoming an awesome person to whom the best people want to

relate to and choose to partner with. Indeed, a person who has the humility, it takes to be reasonably interdependent and not too stubbornly independent. In a more contemporary vernacular, the pointers we propose intend to help forming a 'cluster' or creating a 'tribe'. Here then are a few pointers that are worth considering.

☐ Expand your circle of influence

Over the past decade, researchers have made interesting discoveries about a phenomenon called 'clustering' (Burchard 2017:162). In simple terms, this is very much the same as the old cliché that we are like the five people on average that we associate the most with. It then follows that it is advantageous to expand one's circle of influence so that it includes more people who are experts or have had better success than oneself and to spend more time with them. Burchard (2017:162) cites Amy Poehler who argues that we have to 'find a group of people who challenge and inspire [us], spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life'.

☐ Show a genuine fellow feeling for others

If we do not have a genuine fellow feeling for the desires, passion and a real indignation at the suffering and uncertainties of others, people become intolerable to one another and cannot support and enjoy each other's company. Therefore, often one party is confounded by the violence and passions of the other, whilst the other is enraged at the cold insensibility and want of feeling. We therefore have to make it a point to take interest in other's lives. This is a no brainer but so often people lack simple courtesy when it comes to appreciate that others also have passions and fears and the good and bad in life impact them as well. Simple courtesies like having a balanced conversation with people, that allow for equal give and take, can build bridges and contain tension and apprehension. It is also very useful to be flexible and make time for others. Making time in getting to

know others and study their needs are more often than not a good investment. This includes showing our genuine fellow feeling by giving others credit. One leadership principle is that one should take all the responsibility for failure but share credit with the people who helped. This can help us to refrain from becoming self-absorbed. When we recognise that our success depends on those around us, it is not only much easier to stay humble but equally important to develop a genuine fellow feeling for others.

☐ Preserve the dignity of others

Preserving the dignity and promoting the wellbeing of others, especially the vulnerable and those of lower status, can never be considered as an inconvenience. We can surely not expect to flourish and be happy if most people in our circle of influence are poor and miserable. We have to ensure that those in our circle of influence are well-fed, clothed and lodged. We therefore have to be very mindful whether we are aiding those in our circle of influence in growing materially, mentally, emotionally and spiritually or switching them off or defiling their own efforts to preserve their dignity and to prosper and flourish. After all, like most of us, we care about our company and our colleagues if they care about us. It therefore follows that if we are desirous to be cared for and to prosper and flourish, we have to help preserve the dignity of others and passionately believe in their potential and it is of even greater importance to strive for their growth in new and positive directions. We therefore like to reiterate what Shorkend and Golding (2018:67) recommend. They emphasise the importance of getting personal and personalising. We ought to know the people in our circle of influence, those we are leading, working with or related to us as well as we can, to find out what makes them tick and what their growth aspirations are. We need to find out what the unique magic of each person is and what we need to do differently to be better equipped to help them grow and promote their own dignity.

☐ **Reading their hearts**

The best experiences happen in people's hearts, not their heads. Therefore, we have to treat people not the way we wanted to be treated. We have to treat them the way they want to be treated. But in order to do so, we have to invest the time in getting to know them because we cannot treat people as if they are all the same. When we treat people as unique and authentic beings that have a purpose in life and treasure what they regard as meaningful, we touch their hearts and they feel treasured and cared for; that in turn, unleashes their full potential and their 'caring' back into our lives and organisations are mutually beneficial. People most often than not reciprocate when they are cared for. Inversely, when people experience that we do not truly care about them, they cease to care about us. They simply 'check out' and leave our circle or they stay put but only do the bare minimum and pay less attention to the relationship. The end result is a discord in the relationship. An attitude that threatens mutual lack of empathy eventually distorts perceptions and expectations, and creates a divide that makes ongoing cooperation and partnering less possible. It is therefore advantageous to all, to work towards a concord of affections and aspirations in order to allow everyone to prosper. This may entail that all those involved 'flatten' their expectations and refine their tenor of conduct and reduce it to be in harmony and in concord with the emotions that are required to sustain the relationship and circle of influence. In the end, people do not have the same emotions because each person will have a different perspective on their own interest. Each person should lower their expectations until they are more acceptable and move closer to where they all started the discourse. This means that all parties should reconsider their passionate or perhaps extreme stances by viewing them as if through the eyes of the others involved. The end result is a fair and reasonable expectation of a beneficial future and a bonding of the 'hearts' and emotions.

☐ Creating a vision that everyone understands and incite 'tribal' loyalty

We have touched on this important aspect earlier on. The so-called 'why'. But in growing interdependent and mutually beneficial relationships, it is vital that there is a concord regarding the core purpose and overall vision whether this is within a family, societal or organisational context. A shared purpose creates a 'north' that everyone understands and can hopefully buy into and is energised by working towards (Shorkend & Golding 2018:70). The old proverb by Antone de Saint-Exupery, writer and author of *The Little Prince* (cited by Shorkend & Golding 2018:69) holds true even today. If we want to build a ship, or for that matter desire to build an interdependent relationship, we should not drum up people to collect wood and we should not assign them tasks and work, until we have taught them to long for the needless immensity of the sea. What needs to happen if we are desirous to engage with others in an interdependent mutually beneficial relationship, we at a most simplistic level have to answer the 'why'. When defining the *why* we have to make sure that the shared purpose hits all of these points (Shorkend & Golding 2018:73):

- elicits joy
- enables connection
- inspires exploration.

Only when people are incited and their hearts are touched and willing to move, a movement will ensue. Then the direction taken as pointed out will be followed and people will become committed to the desired interrelated relationship. In today's world that is drowning in content and competition for attention, a shared vision is crucial to create 'tribal' loyalties around common interest, passions and identities. As humans we want to be part of something bigger than ourselves. Therefore the 'tribe' will only sustain if they have something to strive for. Not only will this get the 'tribe' involved and excited – but the 'tribe' will also see it as their mission to convert others. Apart from motivating the 'tribe'

with a mission, the following initiatives may prove invaluable in creating 'tribal loyalties' and a heightened interdependent engagement (Entrepreneur.com 2019:1–4).

Firstly, inspire people with our original story. To truly connect with others, they need to know how we got started and why. What has inspired us. What obstacles did we overcome? Our mission and creation story ought to be intertwined to successfully convey the purpose and meaning of it all. *Secondly,* it is very essential to understand the importance of association and the unique language that accompanies such association. This not only creates a positive 'us versus them' but equally important a strong sense of belonging. *Thirdly*, association or belonging to the 'tribe' should not come cheap. This may sound silly and being exclusionary, but strong criteria or a strong value system ought to be created as hoops for prospective 'joiners'. *Fourthly,* we have to remember to create valuable insider content that gives the 'tribe' insider status. These are but a few initiatives to consider creating a reciprocal interdependent relationship whereby all involved feel appreciated, valued and belonging and working towards something bigger, smarter and worth the attention.

☐ Give a high level of service

Paul Saginaw, co-founder of Zingerman's Deli (Shorkend & Golding 2018:202) once wrote: 'I have no right to ever expect that someone that works for us is going to give higher level of service to a quest, than I'm willing to give to the employee'. These very inciteful and wise words also apply to any interdependent relationship. We cannot expect others to sustainably and continuously treat us with greater decency and empathy than we are willing to treat them. This is the reality, with a few exceptions here and there. Therefore, if we want to put a team or a group of people together for whatever reason, we have to treat them with decency and place trust in them. If others do not feel safe to think, express, experiment, make mistakes, learn and grow, they would not commit and share part of them to our mutual cause.

Only when we behave awesomely by giving a higher level of service and upholding a higher value system and tenor of conduct, we will be able to incite others to join our circle of influence and be able to retain those who are within the circle and incite them to shoot the lights out and be proud to say that they are associated with us and our mutual cause.

☐ Fulfil a need in others

Perhaps this point should have been raised much earlier. But let us get on with it. Dale Carnegie, the well-known New York business mogul (Theodoropoulos 2017:1) once said that to be successful one must fulfil a need and do something that is necessary, which is to say fulfil other's needs – something that brings progress for others and their interests and helps to bring balance to their lives, in a way that has no serious and enduring negative impact on the lives of others. But much earlier, Adam Smith made this aspect a central tenet of his economic model and ethics. Adam Smith's assertion, as far back as 1759, is that we cannot live only focussed on self-interest because we all at times need others, whether for cooperation or for assistance. Given this fact, we have to work together in such a way that we reach a mutual goal. In Smith's (1759, cited in Smith 1982) seminal work *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he asserts that:

> [*W*]e as humans have to understand that we are dependent on a permanent lifelong assistance of others and ought to be other-centered rather than to be at all times self-centered. (p. 26)

In fact, Adam Smith observed that a person who is prepared to depend on others would more likely prevail and achieve a good quality of life by adjusting their self-interest and recognising the interests of others. Adam Smith's economic model and ethics therefore advanced the notion that to be other-centred one ought to care for others and in so doing ensure that a person's interest is cared for. Differently said, this approach implies that satisfying one's own interest is contingent upon addressing the interests of others. Therefore, we have to serve each other's interest. Adam

Smith in his *Lectures on Jurisprudence* (eds. Meek, Raphael & Stein 1983:307) argued that to be other-centred does not simply mean 'coaxing and courting', but a genuine and real commitment to an advantageous outcome. Smith asserts (Meek et al. 1983:347) that the 'mere love is not sufficient for it, till I [*sic*] apply in some way my [*sic*] mind to the self-love of the other party'.

We wish to conclude this section by finally summarising that what has been said can be reduced to the most famous American customer courtesy: 'How can I help You'.

This is the essence of Habit #3. Much more can be said but we have to conclude. Being other-centred is not easy. But a compassionate connection and a genuine fellow feeling for others is the central hope for a fulfilling world. Other centredness is a way of life most likely to maximise value. In a recent article from the University of Sheffield, the author Byerly (2015) wrote:

> We argue that one is less likely to maximise total value if one doesn't possess this trait. (p. 2)

■ Habit #4: Embrace diversity and openness

■ 'Have a global mindset'

Much has already been said in Chapter 2 to Chapter 4 about the relative importance of the increasing diversity and openness that are evolving and in particular in the unfolding Fourth Awakening and the emergence of The Fourth Generation. The more developed societies become, the more interconnected they are, the economy in particular, domestically as well as internationally. Being a good neighbour and accepting other cultures are therefore becoming central to enhancing reciprocal trade and general prosperity. It is therefore important that we develop a strong habit to value the differences and not to regard others as ignoble and contemptible, especially if we are desirous of being prosperous in a diversified and heterogenic society. Valuing differences is the essence of synergy and a fundamental part of

the principle of creative cooperation. As Covey (1989:277) asserts: 'the key to valuing those differences is to realize [*sic*] that all people see the world not as it is, but as they are'. We agree with Covey (1989:277) that a truly effective individual is humble enough to recognise his or her own perceptual limitations and to appreciate the gift of interaction with the hearts and minds of other people. A truly effective and integrated person would never argue that the person's paradigm of the world, the way the person lives, the person's culture and rituals are the only path and that all others are 'off the track'. The person will be limited by the person's own conditioning, as the person would view the person's paradigm as the only objective way to see the world. The person would not gain any further insight from the experiences, positive or negative, of those who such a person regards as 'buried by the Minutia' (Covey 1989:277) and who is lacking the correct insight. With such a paradigm, the person is never effectively independent nor effectively interdependent. But the person who recognises that sameness is not oneness, but that oneness is complimentary would value those differences in others because those differences add to the person's knowledge, to the person's paradigm and understanding of reality. In fact, sameness is uncreative. We therefore believe that we ought to value the differences in other people and when there is disagreement or a different value appreciation, we ought to simply say 'Good! We see it differently'. We need not agree; we can simply acknowledge the other person and seek to understand them, their views and their different take on reality (Covey 1989:284).

It is important therefore, for our own prosperity, not to expect everyone to be on the same page, nor should we treat people as if they are all the same because we are the same in one context but separated in another. Our strength should be in our openness and ability to look for a synergistic third reality. This third reality is not a compromise. Interpersonal synergy, or synergy in diversity, lies in intrapersonal synergy that is synergy within oneself. The essence of intrapersonal synergy finds expression in the principles

of the first five habits, which give an individual the personal security to be an effective independent person who can handle the risks of being open and vulnerable in a heterogenic and multicultural society. Essentially, what we are saying is that we ought to be able to embrace the beauty of the cultures, value systems, beliefs and opinions of others. Insecure people want reality to be morphed to suit their conditions and take on life. They have a great desire, or rather an in-built fear, that drives them to clone others to mould them until they think along the lines of the same paradigm. They do not realise that the very strength of the interpersonal connectedness is in having different points of view. This is the essence of creative thinking and creativity in general – the search for the kernel of truth that would create synergy and an exponential higher outcome. We therefore support the notion of Stack (2013:2), a productivity keynote speaker that innovation can only grow in a well fertilised field that instead of stunting growth helps find ways to encourage interaction and the exchange of ideas. A wide range of working styles, thought processes and viewpoints are essential to avoiding 'homo-thinking' or 'group-thinking', where a homogenised team loses the ability to see solutions obvious to others. This also applies to other aspects of culture other than the economy. We do not have to break down other's cultures but simply create another cultural silo. The cross-fertilisation that results from embracing diversity and openness will blossom into ideas that we can all profit from. Therefore, let us prepare ourselves to be strong, independent and efficient people who have no fear of having a global mindset and could, with the greatest confidence, embrace what is beautiful and wholesome in the cultures, views, beliefs and ideas of others. Let us therefore become habitually mindful that there is a value and beauty in diversity and let us embrace it. As Scott (2017) in her book *Radical Candor,* as cited by Shorkend and Golding (2018), so aptly put it:

> The fastest path to artificial relationships at work [*and it applies to other circumstances*], and to the gravitational pull of organisational mediocrity, is to insist that everyone have the same worldview. (p. 150)

■ Habit #5: Seek first to understand rather than to be understood

■ 'Having a teachable spirit'

If an internal standard of prosperity and excellence makes solid performance necessary, then the internal force of *curiosity* makes it more achievable. As it would be expected, to be excellent in what we do and to continue to prosper, we always have to be curious and ought to keep the learning switch on because new circumstances and conditions continue to challenge the status quo and acquired knowledge. The world of flux that we experience today requires of us to use every opportunity to broaden our knowledge and experience. Though we can never become completely knowledgeable and never should we set such a goal for ourselves, we have to make ongoing endeavours towards progression in various areas (Todorovic 2019:6). Because circumstances and new emerging conditions constantly challenge our understanding of the world, we constantly have to test paradigm, theories and protocols and come up with new ones. Even old and proven knowledge and thinking should not be left alone, but be re-examined, redefined and updated. Therefore, we have to constantly pursue after progress and investigating what is most likely the truth and not what we believe the truth is. This means we have to have a teachable spirit if we wish to be proactive in our response to changing circumstances and conditions. From our perspective, there are a few prior conditions that we have to master so that we may develop a teachable spirit. These preconditions are described in the following sections.

☐ We should be filled with curiosity and a spirit of enquiry

Curiosity and ingenuity are prerequisites for economic prosperity and success. Not only would a spirit of enquiry and curiosity help

us to explain the chain of events and devise new paradigms and protocols, but of equal importance, it would help discover the pleasure of conveniences and how material objects bring people joy. Because both the natural and human-made world is full of objects, whether tacit or otherwise, people's understanding of an object's potential to provide pleasure or to create convenience is fundamental to the improvement of human conditions. This happens through self-realisation and a better understanding and experience of the true meaning and beauty of life. What do we mean by this notion? What we mean is that curiosity and a spirit of enquiry are important conditions to develop new innovation and new ways and means to promote economic growth through greater efficiency or new products and services. But what is also important, is that we should discover the intended beauty of such conveniences. Take, for instance, the development of Internet communication. With our spirit of enquiry, this life-changing event has sparked a myriad of new innovations that are bringing endless joy to humans. But what is lacking is our acknowledgement of the pre-eminent nature of the underlying conditions, namely, the existence of microwaves as a form of electromagnetic radiation with varying wavelengths. These pre-eminent conditions that give and sustain life as we enjoy it, escape our curiosity and spirt of enquiry with the result that we do not enjoy the full beauty or supreme blessedness thereof. This is an important pre-eminent condition for the full self-realisation of human existence and the full enjoyment of life. Our curiosity and spirit of inquiry should therefore take us beyond the banal and allow us to discover the originality and sufficiency of the pre-eminence of human existence. Simply put, we should be thankful to Apple for the next I-Phone and all the innovation that originates from the curiosity and spirit of enquiry that prevails in the company. But then, we should be equally thankful for the pre-eminent nature of the microwaves as a form of electromagnetic radiation and our spirit of enquiry and curiosity should cause a spark of gratitude and an internal drive to discover its real beauty. Only then, will we be able to venture deeper into the unknown with a sense of gratitude and a deep-rooted sense of enquiry.

This is important for continued self-realisation and the enjoyment of true prosperity. Let us remind ourselves that it is not what we possess that makes us prosperous but what we value and enjoy with the deepest sense of gratitude. We have to allow our curiosity and spirit of enquiry to discover the underlying potential and pre-eminence of life in order to realise the full potential and quality of being.

By so doing, our intrinsic motivation will be amplified as we would be able to continue to do and pursue what is most interesting, enjoyable and personally satisfying. Only then, will we not need a reward or prodding from others to do something because we would find what we do inherently rewarding and will unleash even greater curiosity. This is what some called 'grit' – having the combined passion and perseverance to learn and discover and trying new ideas, theories, solutions and developing new paradigms.

☐ Check our egos at the door

This is an important precondition in developing a teachable spirit. So often our pride and ego stand in the way of foregoing our views and insights and help open up new perspectives. An egomaniac is never a good listener and therefore not a good learner either. Egomaniacs always try to impress with their unique insights and views and always worry about how they will come across and be received. Apart from being exhausting and dishonest, the doorway to new knowledge therefore remains blocked. In order to remain open to absorb new knowledge we have to check our egos at the door and follow our values and overall gut feeling instead. This way we are in a constant state of wonder but not without values and criteria for proper judgement. As seen in the case of Albert Einstein, his sense of wonder kept him modest throughout his life and made him continue asking questions about the world. There is also another side to this. If we check our egos at the door, we will find it easier to share what we discover. One thing that is interesting and egoless people enjoy as much as learning is sharing their discoveries with others. This

opens up new opportunities to influence others and also to learn from others and in this way advance our personal sense of wonder. This way, it is circular and self-propelling. Admittedly, we often start to slate the opinions of those around us once we feel we have become knowledgeable, even brilliant. We may go as far as dismissing a good proposal or initiative simply because it was not our idea (Todorovic 2019:9). So, let us rely on our reasoning, but if too much pride interferes with it, let us admit that it is not a matter worth pursuing.

☐ Self-assessment

In order to find a good balance between pride, passion, assertiveness and nurturing, we have to be brutally honest with ourselves. This requires constant self-assessment and self-differentiation. We have to be value-centred rather than purpose-centred because the latter could cause us to feel compelled to maintain a certain stance that is not a sufficient condition for progress. We should therefore not feel defeated when we have to re-evaluate our stance. We have to remember that our 'umwelt', our convictions and perceptions of the world are shaped by all the influences that form part of our environment, our families, our teachers, etc. (Todorovic 2019:2) which can roughly be translated as 'self-centred world'. As Todorovic (2019) explains, the:

> [*U*]mwelt is more connected to how we create the image of the world surrounding us by using our senses, but it can be extended to our points of view on philosophical matters. (p. 2)

These convictions acquired throughout life argues Todorovic (2019:2) 'are not wrong per se, but are very likely to be proven incompatible when exposed to an entirely new experience or more difficult questions that need answering'. We therefore have to be continuously on the lookout, for anomalies, where new circumstances and conditions deviate from what we considered as standard, normal or expected. It is from the presentation of anomalies that we could devise a new discourse.

☐ Never take rejection personally

One thing that is most prevalent in our society today is that successful people, regardless of intellect, are more heavily criticised than the unsuccessful (Stanley 2001:60). How we handle personal criticism and rejection will greatly determine how much we learn from it and how much it will derail us. In this regard, we have to learn from Thomas Stanley (2001:60), author of *The Millionaire Mind.* Stanley is of the view and we concur that successful people are different, they do not follow the crowd and are often criticised for being different. Stanley therefore considered 'criticism [as] a necessary form of hazing, the tempering of steel, the boot camp for candidates wanting to succeed'. Stanley, through his research amongst affluent Americans, has concluded that one outstanding character trait that they share is that they 'never take rejections personally' (Stanley 2001:60). On the contrary, they are inspired by criticism. Their secret weapon is that they focus on the message and not the messenger. As Sean Levinson (2012:4) very rightly observed, 'it's very easy to close our minds off from a learning experience due to the nature of the person delivering the message'. Levinson (2012:4) argues that 'an alternate perspective from an unfamiliar source can be a lot more interesting than annoying, if you can get past the natural urge to judge'. Smart people, according to Levinson (2012:4), appreciate other people's opinions. They do not let their knowledge of a person stand in the way of that person making a contribution. Smart people want to learn from all interactions, so they focus on the topic under discussion and its broader implication and meaning, not just the person they are discussing it with.

☐ Learn from their mistakes

This is an important element to master and to develop a teachable spirit. Smart people know that mistakes are acceptable as long as they learn from those mistakes (Daringtolivefully n.d:7). Instead of being afraid of making mistakes, smart highly independent

persons with a strong and stable core of values and principles take a trial-and-error approach to life. They have the capacity and trust in themselves that they can try something new, analyse what they did right and what they did wrong. Based on the self-assessment and also speaking to others, they would modify their approach accordingly, and try again. They see their mistakes as deferred success and select to fall forward rather than backward. So, we should not dwell too long on our errors.

☐ Forcing our own path

When failure knocks on the door, open the door and invite it in. Embrace failure! But remain open for new insights. However, we do not have to worry about what others think of us. As Travis Bradberry (2019:4) argues, 'nothing is more uninteresting than someone who holds their true back because they're afraid that other people might not like it'. Smart and interesting people are true to themselves wherever they are, whoever they with and in whatever they are doing. Smart people are authentic and passionate to their cause and will forge their own path. They do not give up their ideas just because others do not agree.

☐ Read a lot and learn how to learn

Smart people are readers. To live fully requires that we read a lot not only to keep us informed but also most importantly, reading teaches us to focus, stretches our minds, exposes us to different perspectives and helps us in creating new ideas (Daringtolivefully n.d.:6). Coupled with that, we have to develop ourselves into quick learners to keep up with all the new developments of today's fast-paced world. Being able to learn quickly has become a kind of 'superpower' (Daringtolivefully n.d.:7). Let us develop this 'superpower'.

☐ Seek first to understand

This brings us to the true kernel of having a teachable spirit, namely to aim to understand first and then to be understood. In

fact, all of the above can be collapsed into this one truth. This mindset involves a very deep shift in paradigm (Covey 1989:239). Let us be honest, we typically seek first to be understood. We are so eager to read our autobiography into other people's lives. When we listen to others, we listen to react and not to understand. As simple as that: The way forward is to apply 'empathic listening' (Covey 1989:240). This according to Covey is to listen with the intent to understand. In emphatic listening, we listen with our ears, eyes and most importantly with our hearts. As Covey (1989:241) puts it, 'You listen for feeling, for meaning. You listen for behaviour'. We have to apply both our right brain as well as our left. Our sense, our intuit and our feeling. Let us therefore focus on understanding others, validating others and appreciating others. This is perhaps the most important key to develop a teachable spirit and be knowledgeable to the degree required to respond proactively to the changing conditions and the unknown future.

■ Habit #6: Be parsimonious and live with moderation

■ 'Prodigality and unfair trade perverts' liberty'

As articulated in the introduction to this chapter, the innate nature of the unfolding trends as articulated in Chapters 2–4 can be summarised in six-word narratives namely: *Velocity; Uncertainty, Opportunities, Diversity, Integration* and *Universality.* Those overarching themes, we believe, ought to manifest clearly in our economic conduct. As this particular habit, more specifically relates to our economic conduct, we have limited our brief exposition to five elements of our economic construct that ought to be continuously learned and mastered in order to be responding effectively to the unfolding trends and give effect to the narrative aforesaid. Admittedly, much more can be included in such an exposition, however, we believe that these five elements

are indicative of the overarching need to master the habit of parsimony and moderation. But before we proceed, we have to offer our brief etymological understanding of the two narrative words. Etymologically, we associate *parsimony* not with the negative connotations of 'stinginess' or 'penny-pinching', but rather the more prudential concepts of being *thrifty* and *to act sparingly* that is borrowed from the Latin word *parcere.* The etymological meaning that we associate with the word 'moderation' is 'avoidance of extremes' or 'to control'. In other words, the overall narrative of this habit may be summarised in two concepts, namely: *be thrifty* and the 'avoidance of extremes'. Hopefully, this will clarify some uncertainty. Let us now proceed. The five elements that we will briefly touch on in support of, and to further contextualise the overarching theme of this habit are:

- making becoming use of your own
- creating prosperity to reinvest
- respect equal human dignity
- trade fairly and cause no harm
- accept the universality of resources.

We are of the view that these five elements give some credence to the overall themes of the unfolding events as contextualised in the six-word narratives as eluded earlier and could be the foundation from where one could build a more comprehensive analysis of the required economic conduct that will be most responsive to the unfolding events. Let us set out these five elements briefly.

☐ Making becoming use of one's own

The first element is about using what is one's own in a suitable and appropriate manner. This element is very much the foundation of what is referred to as distributive justice or the becoming use of one's resources within the confines of the behavioural expectations of the society or group. The overall criteria for the efficient or becoming use of one's resources is defined by fairness

and social needs and norms of society. In other words, to use what is yours in a suitable and fitting way that differs from place, time, age, dignity and circumstances. It is therefore all about *proportionality*. Or differently said, to live in moderation in one's bounty and avoiding excess therein. Essentially what this implies is that we do not act irresponsibly but rather prudent and live in harmony with society and then most importantly with the specific associated group and the people within our circle of influence, be it family, colleagues, other relatives, employees, etc. With this, we do not imply that we cannot have fun or be boring. Responsibility and prudence do not equate to be uninteresting. It only means that we have to live an integrated life most befitting and suitable to the prevailing conditions and circumstances not only, as these conditions and circumstances apply to us, but, as we have alluded to before, to those within our circle of influence. For instance, because of the unfolding trends and the associated uncertainties and velocity of changes that may impact all of us, we have to be very mindful not to overlook the possibility to save money for rainy days. Likewise, we should not put all our eggs in one basket and not take unnecessary risks. What is also important is to apply proper beneficence. What do we mean by that? This means that we have to be mindful, that apart from caring for ourselves, there might be instances, because of the velocity of changes and the uncertain times, that we have to, within our means and by making becoming use of what we possess, care and support those in our circle of influence. They are the people who have a direct impact on our lives and those that we have a direct influence over. This means that it might be required to be charitable and generous to those close to us and support and offer assistance in times of uncertainty, disruption, hardship and loss. But it is equally important, to make becoming use of our resources, to help those 'close to us' to become prosperous as well and apply the principle of fair means to protect their dignity too. Then we use our resources within the confines of the applicable conditions and expectations of the greater society, especially within our circle of influence.

☐ Creating prosperity to reinvest

For decades, since the 1930s during the period of consumerism and demand-economics, the emphasis has been on the economic growth and then in particular the Gospel of Milton Friedman that focusses and maximises profits to benefit shareholders and promotes conspicuous consumption with the underlying narrative of spending freely and even waste freely. With the unfolding trends and the anomalies arising, the post-secular economy today still focuses on economic growth – but discernible and sustainable growth. Investment in growth opportunities is still very highly sought after, but the focus is shifting. Today society is becoming much more discerning. What society is now looking to instead, is to create economic growth and prosperity; in other words, making money, not purely for maximising shareholders profit and for pure conspicuous consumption and indulgence, but to reinvest in more sustainable opportunities. In other words, 'Prosperity with a purpose'. The purpose being to reinvest in discernible and sustainable growth opportunities that is Green economy, IoT, shared and gig economy, etc. To capitalise on these investment opportunities of our new age and to live a more discerning life, we ought to be more parsimonious and discerning in spending on luxuries and extravagances. This is vitally important in order to have the means to support the new growth opportunities and be able to 'weather' uncertain economic times.

This is bringing us back to the classical economic model and ethics of Adam Smith, who advanced the notion that a person ought to be parsimonious, in other words, to be thrifty and to spend sparingly, so that one can accumulate capital and one can invest in something productive or with which one can buy productive labour. Any revenue is consumed or saved. The saved revenue becomes circulating capital, which is most commonly spent on maintaining productive labour, material production or rendering of services. Those who also save out of their revenue add to their capital either by employing 'productive hands or by lending for a share in the profits' (Smith 1976:285). What is therefore fundamentally important is that the temptation to

prodigality or excessive or wasted spending and consumption especially on extravagance, profligacy and lavishness ought to be resisted in favour of moderation and being frugal with money and resources, in order to accumulate savings or surplus. This is important not only for future investment and to be able to capitalise on the investment opportunities but also to build up a nest egg for times of disruption and uncertainty.

☐ Respect equal human dignity and proportional fairness

As the world becomes more interconnected and trade interrelated, it is fundamentally important that exchange ought to take place amongst 'equals', though people, inevitably in an unequal world, will be of different merit, status and ability. As fairness in trade has to be upheld as a universal and ethical disposition, it is required that we respect the human dignity of every person equally when we trade, contract, explore, etc. In this regard, two fundamental principles have to be advanced. Namely, *equality of dignity* and *proportional fairness* that are both founded in the *principle of equality*. With the principle of equality of dignity, all persons ought to be free of domination, enslavement and coercive powers. Trade should therefore be on a voluntary basis and ensure that all stakeholders should be free of domination and enslavement. The concept of 'proportional fairness' has two elements. Firstly, the ration of exchange should not bring about injury to any of the stakeholders. The reasonable expectation is that the stakeholders are fully, to the extent possible, compensated. This requires that all stakeholders get what they pay for and pay for what they get. This is based on the principle of *quid pro quo.* The second element that is related to the aforesaid is that people according to the principle of utility are compensated proportionally, according to the contribution. In other words, it is justifiable that a person with a higher responsibility ought to be paid proportionally more than a person of lower responsibility. Likewise, the price of goods and services ought to be equal at all times and circumstances to the utility and scarcity in order to

establish an equilibrium and be free of manipulation and coercion. For instance, a property in liquidation should be sold at a price equal to the utility and not at a substantially lower price purely to liquidate the debt instrument. Otherwise, the estate of the owner of the property is not protected nor is the principle of fairness maintained. This is referred to as a 'fair means' that is concerned with the proportionate ratio of commensurable goods, services, task, etc. Thus, a 'just' wage is a wage proportionate to the type and which is neither too great nor too little and as such disproportionate (Kruse Kronicle 2005:1). A 'just' price is a price proportionate to the type, utility and scarcity which is also neither too excessive nor too little and therefore disproportionate. In both instances as aforesaid, the principle of justice is administered by the rule of fact, regardless of the merit or place of the parties concerned. What this means is that a person of higher merit or higher status is not entitled to be compensated more than the person of lesser merit or lower status, other than by the fact of utility or value contribution. It is therefore not a matter of principle but rather utility and fact.

☐ Trade fairly and cause no harm

Given the sensitive eco-environment and the advancement of technologies, the principle of fair trade and doing no harm to people and the planet are of paramount importance. In all instances, this goes beyond complying with legal requirements. It is about doing the right thing to keep the dignity of the people and the earth safe and ensure their wellbeing. Underlying this is 'fair play'. 'Fair play' means to be engaged in a just and honest economic conduct that is willing to give and reciprocate, keeping promises, not causing injury to persons or their property and having a good regard to everything which does not belong to you. This is what Aquinas (Abba 2016:3) referred to as engaging in economic conduct that is done in all righteous manner, in equity and fair play.

☐ Accept the universality of resources

The paradigm of the universality of resources is rooted in the concept that all people are entitled to share in the resources of this world. This is an ethical concept and does not imply a repeal of private property rights. Nor does it imply that every person ought to be entitled, in terms of the principle of distributive justice, to an equal or identical number of resources. It does imply, however, that it would be unjust to withhold from a person the basic conveniences, amenities and amusement such as food, shelter and clothing. We must therefore acknowledge that the universal destination of earthly resources is for the advancement of human dignity and the maintenance of the greatest possible quantity of human happiness. In the use of resources, we should not regard the external resources to be legitimately owned for exclusive use, but are for common use, in the sense that the resources should be employed for the benefit of others as well as oneself. Therefore, every person has the right to possess a sufficient amount of the earth's resources and those that the person is responsible for. Thus, in keeping with the universality of resources and the social nature of human beings, the resources of each person are necessarily related to the common good (Catholic Strength 2018:4). The principle of the common good requires the social wellbeing and development of the group as well. The paradigm of the universality of resources implies therefore that owners of resources should use resources for personal advancement in ways that also advance the common good and not cause any harm to the common good. In this regard, we ought to acknowledge that the universal common good of the great system of the universe is not a person's primary responsibility. Each person, in the first instance, has to take care of his or her own happiness, of that of his or her family, friends and country (Smith 1982:237). In this regard, the neglect of the smallest duty cannot be justified by a philosophical, speculative and contemplated paradigm of the prosperity of the universe.

Therefore, the person who acts according to the rules of perfect prudence, of strict justice, fair play, beneficence and respect for the dignity and property of others may be said as Adam Smith (1982:237) asserts 'to be perfectly virtuous'. We therefore agree with Adam Smith's assertion that: 'The most perfect knowledge, if not supported by the most perfect self-command, will not always enable him [*sic*] to do his [*sic*] duty'.

This then is the essence of this habit. That we have to continuously act with the greatest self-command and prudence so that we may be parsimonious and live with moderation. The aim is to have the capacity, financially and economically, to capitalise on the opportunities unfolding and to be able to care for those in our circle of influence especially in times of uncertainty, loss and hardship. As prodigality and unfair trade perverts liberty, in all our economic endeavours, we should always play fairly, honour our promises and respect and protect the dignity of others and cause no harm to others or their property.

■ Habit #7: Practice self-care

■ 'Having physical and mental tenacity'

We are coming now to the last of the 10 habits that we have identified that matter the most in reaching and sustaining long-term prosperity. In the competitive environment that we now live, we need to be conditioned physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. To extract the most out of oneself and to be the absolute best, one needs to be energised. This is indeed not trivial, particularly when we consider the psychological, emotional, physical and even spiritual strain which comes with the tremendously challenging environment of the modern society. If we want to achieve our most important goals, we will sometimes feel discomfort, become frustrated, experience physical strain or endure psychological pain. Smart people therefore know that this discomfort has to be tolerated for them to grow and improve. But to do just that requires of us to practice self-care. We have to

exercise body, mind and spirit. Having a healthy body and mind and an enlightened spirit lets us do more with our limited time and gives us more energy to do the things that will help us to succeed and prosper. We agree with Harris (2019:26) that being healthy in body and mind and spirit would help us to not only be more successful and prosperous but would also allow us to enjoy the fruits of our success longer, making us fit and spirited enough to create more memories, and enjoy the best of what the world has to offer. It also helps us to have more meaningful relationships and spend special quality time with our loved ones. On top of that, it can also make us more attractive to the people we want to partner with, professionally and socially.

This brings us to the important habit of self-care and the ongoing renewal of the four important dimensions that are prerequisites for having a balanced life – physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. These four dimensions, according to Covey (1989:288), are the essential elements of a healthy balanced life. George Sheehan, an expert on running, says that we all have four roles: being a good animal (physical); a good craftsman (emotional); a good friend (social) and a saint (spiritual). Perhaps it may be difficult to be a good 'animal' and a 'saint' at the same time, but the point remains that smart people give expression to all four of these roles regularly and consistently in sustainable ways they enjoy. Unfortunately, plenty of people do justify poor behaviour in these areas of our nature. Too often and we have done the same at times, we come up with a lot of nonsensical reasons to justify why we do not take proper care of ourselves, but if the demands of our jobs or lifestyle require of us to learn fast, deal with stress, be alert, pay attention, remember important things, be innovative, being socially and high spirited, then we have to give more priority to self-care. Burchard (2017:118) put it so aptly: 'If you care about your contribution to the world, you'll care for yourself'.

Much has been written about the importance of exercising and the three dimensions and we would not endeavour to be

complete in our analysis. But for the purpose of bringing across the importance of self-care as an important habit, we will only briefly highlight areas of attention.

☐ The physical dimension

The physical dimension refers to how we care for our bodies – eating healthily, resting enough, relaxing and exercising regularly. Exercise keeps us healthy, lowers our cholesterol and strengthens our immune system. Exercise helps our bodies produce more of the brain-derived neurotropic factor (BDNF). This causes neurons and other areas in the brain, creating *increased plasticity* and the ability to learn faster, and improves our memory and the overall brain function. Exercise also improves *endurance*. Endurance comes from aerobic exercise and cardiovascular efficiency. Though exercise makes you feel tired, this is partially true. With improved endurance, we will have much more energy. Exercise also improves *flexibility* through stretching and *strength* that comes from resistance exercise.

☐ Mental dimension

But self-care does not stop with a healthy body. We sometimes allow our minds to atrophy. Many of us do not read seriously and neglect our natural curiosity. We stop exploring subjects not related to the work we do. We have to take greater care to improve our mental cognitivity through critical thinking and analytical writing. It may sound quite trivial and unscientific, but we have to be more selective and demonstrate greater wisdom when it comes to the programmes we watch on television. Apart from spending too much time watching television, we have to be able to discriminate and to select informative, inspiring and entertaining programmes which best serve and express our values and contribute to our knowledge and information to understand the potentialities in our field of expertise and interest.

☐ The social/emotions dimension

The social and emotional dimensions of our lives are tied together. We have to take particular care of this dimension of our nature because it is vital for the development of relationships with others. In particular, in a heterogenic and multicultural society as it is evolving which place a particular demand on our emotional capacity to deal with diverse emotions, perspective, beliefs and prejudices. As most of us are functions of the social mirror of society, we tend to be dictated to by the people around us. We listen to their opinions, perceptions and are influenced by their paradigms. Because of this, as interdependent people, we have to develop a strong sense of self-differentiation rooted in a character that is principle-centred. Only then can we reflect back to others a clear, undistorted vision of ourselves. Remember, we see the world not as the world is but from our own reality or paradigm of the world. Likewise, we see others through our personal lenses and if we are principle-centred and independent in constitution, we can affirm the good as well as the evil in others through a more objective third-party lens. We are in a position to shape others and worthwhile individuals with good principles and values. When we know and live our calling, purpose and meaning in life, we can, with greater ease, help others to write their own stories too. Then our paradigm or worldview will become a self-fulfilling prophecy because we will surround ourselves with people of equal standing, with the same values and ideals, irrespective of the differences that may prevail.

☐ Spiritual dimension

In a changing world characterised by high velocity of change and flux, we need a strong stable core. As our bodies, emotions and mental opportunity may fluctuate, the spiritual dimension should be the core, our centre, our commitment to our value system. This is a very private area of our lives, yet the most supremely important one. This is the core from which we examine our motives. This is the core that provides us meaning and purpose.

To take care of this dimension takes an investment of time. It requires a heightened sense of self-awareness, self-differentiation and humility to develop a strong sense of serenity and peace. Today, in our high flux world, we have to develop and revitalise our spirit so that we can be optimistic about the future whilst be realistic of the prevailing reality – *knowing who we are and what our destiny is.*

■ Conclusion: Towards a fulfilling life

The seven habits outlined earlier embody many fundamental principles for achieving enduring human success and prosperity during the unfolding events and the changing conditions.

These habits build upon one another. These habits are about me and you making our 'mark' in this world through self-betterment. These habits are about self-betterment, in other words, to improve and better ourselves, so that we may live a fulfilling life and take care of those within our circle of influence – all those sensible and reasonable people who are within our circle of influence. Although the focus is on character development, self-betterment is much more than that and also includes material wellbeing. The latter, therefore, in regard to these habits, applies mitatus mitandi. In contemporary vernacular and idiom, these habits are about making our mark through self-betterment and to build a strong *brand*. But why do we use the idiom of 'brand' and making our 'mark'. The word 'brand', according to the Business Dictionary, is a unique design using a combination of signs, symbols and words to *create an image that identifies* a product and *differentiates* it from its competitors. If this effort is successful, consumers gradually come to associate this image with a level of credibility, quality and satisfaction. The legal term for a brand is *Trademark.* This is a beautiful allegory of what we have in mind in our discussion on habits. We argue that each of us have to carve our own character and wellbeing one moment at a time. As Toto Wolff (Hamilton 2019:110–111), Executive Director of the Mercedes F1 team so eloquently puts it: We have to

relentlessly pursue to 'being a better you'. We have to develop through self-betterment, qualities of character that impress a 'mark' upon each of our lives. This is exactly what the English word 'character' denotes. The word 'character' is derived from the Greek word 'kharakter' (a 'stamping tool'). From the early sense, this 'stampingtool' places a distinctive identification *mark* on livestock or especially in former times, criminals or slaves that identify the owner. In the new modern idiom and context, the word 'Character' is a distinctive mark that identifies and differentiates very much like what a 'brand' does. In other words, a person of ethical character's habits, actions and judgements can be distinguished by a certain mark. *In this sense, through self-betterment, we have to develop our character and wellbeing in a way that place a mark on our lives that distinguishes us from others and become our* 'brand'. This then is the essential purpose and intent of habits as elucidated. We have to relentlessly pursue to be the best we can be and to carve our own destination and character and wellbeing one moment in time. This we do, by acknowledging first and foremost with gratitude, that God created us all to be successful. As S. Truett Cathy, Chairman of Chick-Fil-A said in an interview (Stanley 2001:185), 'We honour God in our success and not our failures. God created us all to be successful'.

Secondly, as Kobi Yamada (Dowling 2016:2) asserts '[We have to] embrace [our] uniqueness. Time is much too short to be living someone else's life'. Moreira (2017) in his book 'Million Dollar Habits' quotes Wiz Khalifa that said the following:

> The most daring thing is to be yourself and to do exactly what you want to do at that point in time and not to be worried with what other people are doing or what's popular. (p. 163)

By doing this, we will make our lives much more efficient and in turn successful. Therefore, we encourage everyone to believe in themselves because we are created to perform and to be successful. This is exactly what millionaires do. In a study conducted by Thomas J. Stanley (2001:147), he interviewed 733 millionaires and 94% said that to eliminate/reduce fears and

worries they are believing in themselves. They never try to be someone else nor do they try another person's job.

This drive for self-betterment is also treasured and encouraged by the father of economics, Adam Smith. In his seminal work 'The Wealth of Nations' (Smith 1976:341), he wrote the following:

> As no human being is so perfectly satisfied that he [*sic*] is without a wish of alteration or improvement of any kind, a human being will continue to strive to better his [*sic*] conditions of living. In fact, this is a lifelong womb to the grave desire that spur humans to better their conditions by augmenting their fortune, for instance through savings and accumulating their capital. (p. 341)

It is this desire, Adam Smith argues, that is predominant over the whole course of human life at an average. So, we urge you not to be ashamed when you try to augment your fortune. People's innate desire to better themselves and to improve their circumstances should be acknowledged and promoted as a fundamental right of liberty. Let us say it again. This innate desire to produce wealth should not be frustrating. We have to passionately believe that we have the right and ability to take on challenges and new opportunities that capture the imagination and that excite people and in doing so, advance our own fortune.

But then we have to think differently. For the sake of brevity, we will just highlight a few salient issues where you have to apply your mind differently and develop the specific habits as identified to ensure continued prosperity. As our focus is on character building as a person's unique 'brand', our focus will be primarily on those issues that inform and mould our qualities of character:

- *Firstly, you have to shift the focus from a lack to a state of abundance.* This is a powerful quality of character that is very essential to build a win/win brand. The 'Abundance Mentality' is a paradigm that there is plenty out there for everybody (Covey 1989:219). We agree with Covey (1989:219) that many people are deeply in what is called the 'Scarcity Mentality'. People with a Scarcity Mentality have a very different outlook on for instance profit sharing, recognition and reward. They also have a very hard time to celebrate

success of others. You see, they believe that the 'pie' is just that big, and they ought to get the biggest slice possible. Often people with a Scarcity Mentality according to Covey (1989:219) 'harbour secret hopes that other might suffer misfortune – not terrible misfortune, but acceptable misfortune that would keep them in their place'.

- *Secondly, you have to live with confidence in order to respond proactively to new challenges.* Your unique *'brand'* of character and fortune will not come through simple luck. Though at times it does happen! As Samuel Johnson (Burchard 2017:329) puts it: 'Self-confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings'. To that, William Hazlitt (Burchard 2017:330) adds that our confidence equates our capacity. The reason being is that our confidence is not a general belief in oneself as most performance improvements and self-betterment come from the belief in one's abilities in a specific task. This is what Burchard (2017:330) describes as the 'confidence-competence loop'. In a study conducted by Burchard (2017:329) amongst 20 000 high-performance Individuals, he established that confidence is less to do with traits like self-trust, then to those that foster skills. The reality is that confidence is rather a 'muscle' that we build through exertion. Essentially, it is rather the more you do, the more you know. You have to stretch yourselves, as there is no growth in a comfort zone and now comfort in a grow zone (Shorkend et al. 2018:58). The focus ought therefore to be to 'Learn, Leap, Repeat' (Shorkend et al. 2018:59). Therefore, you have to get comfortable with the idea of being uncomfortable, if you would like to gain greater confidence. In this sense, discomfort is part of life and the cause of greater confidence.

- *Thirdly, you have to build the habit of gratitude.* Personally for us, this is a very essential element of self-betterment and living a fulfilling life. Here we agree with William Arthur Ward (Moreira 2017:96) that 'Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgiving, turn routine jobs into joy, and engage ordinary opportunities into blessings'. Gratitude is a very powerful instrument in nurturing tenacity on the one hand and

contentment within yourself and your life, on the other hand. As Stellan Moreira (2017:91) in his book 'Million Dollar Habits' wrote 'To live a completely empowered and self-determined life, a cultivation of sincere and genuine gratitude is essential'. When you are thankful for all your blessings and feel happy about yourself and your life, you feel good inside and that improves your emotional wellbeing. Gratitude also shapes a positive mindset. When you are more optimistic and more hopeful, life becomes full of possibilities (Moreira 2017:93). Then your sense of gratitude makes you resilient in your endeavours. In this way, a strong sense of gratitude would help you to disregard obstacles. For these reasons, we recommend that you keep a 'Gratitude Journal' where you record blessings. You have to never stop telling yourself how fortunate you are to have certain strengths and qualities. Furthermore, you have to continuously build affirmations that centre on gratitude such as 'I am happy with life' and repeat them regularly so that you ultimately unconsciously live with greater sense of gratitude – always counting your blessings – day in and day out.

- *Fourthly, though self-betterment is vital to individual success, me, me, me, is dull, dull, dull.* Yes, we encourage self-betterment and an increased self-awareness of individual uniqueness and the importance of building your own unique 'brand'. But you have to focus on the needs and interest of others *too*. You have to have an empathy for the needs of people and your duty to society. No person is an island in themselves and a person is a person because of the village. This is echoed in the very important African principle of *Ubuntu*. In this regard, you have to heed the call made by Adam Smith that self-interested, unwise behaviours that endanger society's interests in pursuit of the individual's self-betterment should be curbed. Every individual should act in such a way that he or she brings society the greatest value and wealth. This will benefit the individual too. Working towards the wellbeing of society when working for individual self-betterment, wealth and prosperity will only be sustainable in a substantiable society. The pursuit

of self-interest should occur in such a manner that it advances the rights and abilities of others. This would be advantageous for everyone and will uphold the dignity and estate of all. All the aforesaid implies four things: (1) To satisfy your own desire for self-betterment and to live a fulfilling life, you ought to address the interest of others; (2) to satisfy your own interest you have to have a genuine empathy for others, for their desires and passions and for their afflictions and uncertainties; (3) you have to have a cognitive realisation of the consequences of the self-interested decisions you make for others so that you can reach an outcome that is mutually advantageous for all and finally, (4) you should find a balance between your private interest and public duty.

- *Fifthly, you should enjoy your interconnectedness, but you should not over rely on the benevolence and charity of others.* High performers and we suggest most ordinary people too, love to have an influence on others. We enjoy connecting with people and learn how they think; what challenges they face and how we can partner for greater prosperity. Simply put, high performers realise the importance of relating with others (Burchard 2017:337). When we connect with others, we learn more about ourselves and the world. It is this connection with others that inspires greater congruence and competence (Burchard 2017:337). Because the more we work with people the more we learn about ourselves. As Burchard (2017:337) discovered in his studies of high-performance individuals, the more we work with others, the more we learn new ways of thinking, new skills and new ways of serving. However, your own dignity does not benefit from too much benevolence, generosity and charity from others, and it does not develop your person. Even though we constantly need the help of other people around us, we should not rely solely on people's benevolence, it should be saved for the occasional emergency (Meek et al. 1983:493). The reason being is that generosity and benevolence of people towards fellow beings and the occasional help for those in need is but a temporary or an occasional relief (Meek et al. 1983:493).

- *Sixthly, you have to embrace failure.* This is a very important aspect of good living. Your relentless pursuit of being a better person tomorrow than the person you are today requires brutal honesty with yourself, transparency with yourself and helping others to overcome mistakes and shortcomings. This is a big part of good and fulfilling living. You have to develop the habit that when you see something is wrong, you say it and then fix it. This applies to yourself and all others in your circle of influence. In the same vein, you have to encourage everybody in your circle of influence to speak up and point out the shortcomings and deficits. This is instrumental in making oneself and others successful and maintaining a culture of openness and a blame free culture. But when you do fail, you have to be resilient and bounce back. Resilience is therefore an imperative part of living an empowered and fulfilling life. When things do go wrong and do not go your way, you are likely to feel upset and if you lack resilience, you can fall into the trap of negative thinking (Moreira 2017:155). We therefore concur with Moreira (2017:157–161) that you ought to acquire the following three keys of resilience: Firstly, have a purposeful goal. Resilience comes easy when you know what you are striving for; Secondly, believe in yourself every day. To do this you have to frequently go through personal achievements and appreciate and reward yourself for your strengths and endurance and finally, embrace change. You should not hold on stubbornly to what you believe in. It also requires at times to be flexible and adaptable to different circumstance and stimuli. And, thirdly, when fear does creep in, continue to live in spite of the fear paralysis. Successful people who go on to lead exceptional lives continue to act in spite of fear, paralysis and clutter of information and prejudices.
- *Finally, you have to stop worrying about what others think.* You should not give up on your ideas and ideals just because others do not agree with them.

The habits we have elucidated will go a long way to help us to master these seven principles of living a fulfilling life. Admittedly,

there are much more to add. What is however important is that we have to find our own unique sweet spot and develop a brand, as our mark of good character and good fortune.

The seven habits are deeply rooted in the circumstantial conditions and responses required but are also very principled-centred and deeply founded on the specific perceptional analysis of the unfolding events and our view of the world unfolding. In a certain sense, these habits do provide a circumscribed framework for the correct response to the unfolding events and offer secondary traits and principles that are fundamental for human effectiveness and prosperity. Like all habits, these habits do not come naturally at all times and may change with the changing conditions. These habits are more consequential, conditional and circumstantial than universal and deontological in nature. What this means is that the habits in essence are more skewed in favour of reality, conditioning and conditions, and need an external source to propel them on until the habits are a habitual part of human character and conduct. Without this external source, they may fizzle.

This is precisely what John in our allegory meant when he told his coach with a tempered or rather defeated tone that he had started a new diet for the fifth time since he joined the coach. He knows that he is overweight and really wants to change. He told his coach that he reads all the new information, that he sets goals and starts out with a positive attitude and that he tries to maintain this by saying mantras to himself. However, after a few weeks it fizzles out, he just cannot seem to keep the promises he makes himself. John's coach laughed and said to him that he is not the only one struggling with keeping habits. What he needs is to master certain very specific virtues. What is a virtue, John asked? His coach said to him that a virtue is what makes you excellent. Virtues give you the capacity to act with greater reliability and steadiness. Virtues guide you to a more exact spot that gives you a greater sensibility of what you do right and what you do wrong more often than not, so that you can have a keen and earnest understanding of your conduct and character. The coach said to

John, virtues would help you like the lady on your GPS app, telling you which way to turn, when to stop and when to yield. This way, the coach said, virtues not only give you the extra oomph or power but provide you a map to reach your destination. It is virtue, the coach said to John, that is the voice within that reminds you when you feel tired to hold on and repeat to you why you are in the marathon race in the first place. Virtues will not only remind you of why you are in the race but will give you a sense of joy, the pleasure that will erupt when you reach the finish line. Virtue, the coach said, is your *voice within*. It is your conscience. The voice is very powerful and gives you the extra strength you need to be the best you and when you fall, it is the powerful voice that encourages you to stand up and be resolute. If you want to cheat at the next training session, the voice will remind you that excellence only comes to those who are resolute, honest and fearless and not to cheaters. This then is the purpose of Chapter 6 with the heading 'Prosperity virtues'.

In Chapter 6, we will offer a brief exposition of seven virtues that we believe would provide a framework of reference or a map to acquire the necessary sensitivity to the events of human life as impacted upon by the changing conditions. Therefore, a keen and earnest attention to the propriety of our conduct can evolve as a guide to the exact justness of our character. These virtues would help us to impress a *mark* on our habitual conduct and character that would advance our capacity to act with greater reliability and steadiness. This way we will achieve greater excellence and perfection of our human nature that would lead to enduring prosperity and happiness.

Prosperity virtues

■ How to become truly excellent

Remember, John, the marathon athlete in our allegory. Well into his preparation for an upcoming marathon race, John ran a pre-race half marathon to test his skills and refine his in-race strategies and supplements intake. That following Monday, John said to his coach that his pre-race went very well but the last four miles were tough. John's very empathetic coach then explained to John how to run a marathon with the 10/10/10 rule. Anyone who has ever run a marathon excellently and way beyond expectations and race predictions would know what this rule means. The rule means that you run the first 10 miles with your head, meaning being patient and listening to your body. The next 10 miles you run with your legs. Now you have to trust your training, says the coach. Let your body do what it has been trained to do, the coach said. And you run the last 10k with your 'heart', the coach affirms, ought to be pretty self-explanatory. This is your time to surge and start knocking down some roadkill. The coach said to John, that there is no cooler feeling than picking off runners one by one in the final miles of the marathon. Remember, the coach said, any

psychological pick-up and an inspiration that touches your 'soul' can help you to run the last 10k the strongest. The final 10k is your time to shine. John's coach then turns very philosophical, as many good coaches do. The coach said to John, that the 10/10/10 rule not only applies to marathon running but also to all other endeavours in life. If we are desirous to be excellent in our endeavours, we have to understand that it requires a very strong 'heart'. Philosophically speaking, the strength of character. Yes, you can rely on your head and be energy conscious, being patient and thinking things through. Likewise, you can also rely on your body and trust your training and vitality. But to really shine and meet your goals and even exceed expectations, you need a strong 'heart', meaning a strong character. Your strength in a marathon race, the coach said, does not only come from your head and your body, but it comes principally from your heart – OK. That fire in your 'heart' asking you, how badly do you want it? and gives you the spirit of gratitude and resolve to push hard. This then is when a very special habit kicks in, the coach said. *The habit of virtue*. It is a strength within, yet its cause is external. Virtues help us to bring steadiness, reliability and excellence to our competencies and other habits that are 'circumstantial'. Virtues are the fire in your 'heart' that makes the head much more focussed and discerning and gives the strength of resolve and perseverance to your body when the miles lying ahead become cumbersome and daunting. Likewise, when life's challenges are difficult to carry and become unwieldy or when we have to make serious choices and when we require the strength not to harm others or want to simply give up, then the strength of virtues will help us to shine and exceed our expectations. John's coach then said to John, if you want to be the best on your race day and be truly excellent in your endeavour, you simply need to master a few virtues, not many. Virtues will make you strong, reliable, steady, discerning of mind, resolute, and perhaps most importantly grateful for the opportunity afforded and also be compassionate towards your fellow marathoners when they struggle or fall. This playfully said is the role and functions of virtues which is the

content of this chapter. In this chapter, we will expound the role and functions of virtues in making us truly excellent in character, conduct and endeavour.

In the final section of this chapter, we will give a very brief outline of seven virtues that constitute the 'Prosperity Grid' as a framework or network of virtuous traits of character that will ensure your prosperity. How did we get to these 7 virtues? Let's just reiterate what we have asked ourself at the beginning of this chapter. We have asked ourselves what the dispositions of heart and head are whose presence in an individual would tend to increase the person's excellence in pursuance of prosperity and to thrive and flourish in a changing world, and whose absence tends to diminish the possibility. Based on the examination of the unfolding trends, we have concluded that the changing world will be characterised by the following narratives: diversity, integration, self-realisation, dogmatism, interconnectedness, hard work and universality. We then proceeded to identify 7 core competencies and 7 existential habits that would, if being mastered, help you to respond to these narratives with greater proficiency. Now we have come to the end of our exposé. The 7 virtues identified will, as we believe, round off these core competencies and habits by bringing greater steadiness, reliability, coherency and integration. All in all they advance your excellence and empower you to respond to the challenges ahead with calm proficiency. By mastering these virtues with the sacredness it deserves, you will prosper, thrive and flourish in a changing world.

In our attempt to uncover and reveal these seven virtues, our exposé does not pretend to be either academic or complete. We have elected to provide a small and brief treatise on these '7 Prosperity Virtues'. The rationale being, we believe that by being brief and concise, the content is far more digestible and easier to remember. The focus is therefore to provide a very practical account of these 7 virtues and not to offer a scientific account of each virtue. But rather to make the content of the 7 virtues very easy to apply. For us, action speaks louder than words. Seeds of good deeds lead to a good harvest.

Let's now proceed to answer the question of the greatest importance.

The question is: what tone of temper or virtuous traits of character should you have to prosper in a changing world? A changing world that as described in the chapters on 'Trends' that demands not one, not two, but many virtuous traits in order to be responsive to the changing conditions. All these virtuous traits would culminate into one overarching capacity and that is to live life with *calm proficiency*. To live, work and play with *calm proficiency,* you will have to bring your life in balance, where your interior self as a human being and the exterior world are in balance and an equilibrium is achieved. This is of greatest importance because it achieves *symmetry* in your life and the life would be balanced and integrated in order to function with the required calm proficiency This is where your acquired virtuous traits or your tone of temper is key. This means that unity, balance and integration are needed in all dimensions of life, inter alia, to bring your senseless cravings and passions to order:

- to balance life/work conditions
- to balance solipsistic tendencies with greater solidarity with others
- prejudices ought to be restrained by greater self-differentiation
- disorderliness should be changed into a greater degree of orderliness
- achieving a more considerate understanding of yourself and others
- to pursue your life's purpose and meaning with passion, yet not in a solipsistic way but rather by helping others to achieve the same through a well-developed fellow feeling that culminates in a grounded fellowship between you and those in your circle of influence.

This list is not nearly complete. But what ought to be clear is that what is required is a concerted effort to live a balanced life. To achieve symmetry in your life, you have to be more *conscious* and *aware* of how life ought to be lived in a balanced way. It all comes

down to be much more *mindful* and to focus your awareness and conscience on how life ought to be lived in a balanced way at that moment. For instance, to be more mindful of your own passion and desire to be prosperous but also working towards the common good of others. Be more mindful of the universal conditions of human existence and in particular human's interconnectedness with others. Be more aware to forgive yourself and others. To love yourself more but having a greater compassion for others. To live more mindfully in moderation and within your means, and to live a more simple life with the focus on what brings you joy and peace. Essentially what this means is that you are more mindful or *conscious* and *aware* of what is required to respond to the ebb and flow of life. Moral exemplars, ethicists and philosophers in all previous civilisations such as Gautam Buddha (563 BC–483 BC), Plato (429 BC –347/348 BC), Aristotle (384 BC –322 BC), Jesus of Nazareth (5 BC–AD 33) and Adam Smith (1723–1790) have counselled that in order to be most mindful in life, you have to follow the *middle path*. They have all counselled that to mitigate suffering and to live a prosperous life, you have to live a life that is neither characterised by extremities, nor deficiencies. All of them have counselled that you have to look after your prosperity and wellbeing without forgetting your compassion towards others in society. They all have cautioned to avoid addictions, compulsions, selfish and frivolous behaviour. This requires *caution* and *diligence* or to be prudential or showing care and forethought. As mindfulness is about *awareness* and *consciousness* of every moment in life – both the ebb and flow of life and how life ought to be lived in order to prosper and thrive, so is a prudential act about *caution* and *diligence*. You have to deliberately and soberly determine what is excessive and what is deficient. As mindfulness is about perceptions and analysis of the changing conditions and challenges and how to be responsive to the ebb and flow of life, so is a prudential act about measuring and assessing the conveniences and inconveniences. You will have to measure with *caution* and *diligence* which passions should be satisfied and by

what means, and which opportunities should be pursued and what would be required to succeed and how much of your income or resources you will retain for your own good and how much you will employ towards the common good. In measuring each occurrence, the prudential person would act, as Smith (1982:216) asserts, 'with the most perfect propriety in every possible circumstance and situation'. What therefore is needed, especially to be responsive to a changing world, is to act with the sober esteem of modesty, discretion and good conduct (Smith 1982:214), all measured with the required *caution* and *diligence.* Both mindfulness and prudence are therefore required to act with the highest propriety and doing what is right and holistic and conducive to prosperity and hence most ethical in conduct.

The way forward to enjoy prosperity in a changing world is therefore indeed a balancing and measuring act of serious proportions. You will have to balance your interest with those of others, as neither you nor the others are self-sufficient and you are dependent not on their goodwill but rather on their good faith. Likewise, present-day progress has to be balanced with sustainable progress in the future. Your dignity has to be balanced with those of others. And so we can continue! The fact is that to be prosperous in a changing world, you have to live a life that requires *awareness, consciousness, caution* and *diligence,* and this is not a small feat and requires great courage, skill, consistency, resilience, self-differentiation, coherency, truthfulness, firmness in purpose, orderliness and strength. Therefore, what is needed is to develop a tone of temper that combines the best heart *(mindfulness)* with the best head *(prudential),* in order to live with the highest possible (calm) proficiency in a changing world. This is achieved by mastering very specific *virtues.* Therefore, we hold the view that your future prosperity rests on three pillars: (1) mindfulness (2) prudential acts and (3) mastering certain virtues. Admittedly, there is in a way, a circularity to be observed here, whereby being mindful and being prudential can be precluding conditions to being virtuous. But then virtues, on the other hand, advance humans' mindfulness and prudence. Virtue is a specific

human capability to achieve excellence, virtues enlighten the human mind to certain elements of human existence and in so doing, creates an *awareness* and *consciousness* of what is needed to live a befitting life and to prosper. Virtues are also elixirs that correct incorrect behaviour, prejudices and preferences, and as such provide a means to act with the required *caution* and *diligence.* The approach that we have adopted is that virtues, as specific behavioural qualities are indeed precursors to both greater mindfulness and prudential acts of behaviour that complete the circularity between the three pillars of prosperity. In this context, *virtues are precursors to live well and to prosper. Virtues accordingly extend throughout the whole of existence as a harmonious order which gathers unity in human conduct through greater mindfulness and by being most prudential.*

We therefore assert that the '7 Prosperity Virtues' that we have identified as part of the 'Prosperity Grid' and that are worth mastering in order to secure your long-term prosperity will result in greater *mindfulness* in specific dimensions of human life that is needed to prosper in a changing world. These dimensions of life are:

- humans' universal dependence
- order and cleanliness
- human dignity
- solidarity with others
- diverse thoughts and prejudices
- personal wellness
- mindful of oneself
- human progress
- purpose and resolve
- consistency and good faith.

This will be further expounded in the discussion to follow.

It is furthermore our observation that the '7 Prosperity Virtues' will bring greater steadiness and reliability to the core competencies and habits that we have identified and articulated

as necessary skills, behavioural traits or qualities of character needed for continued prosperity. And as such, it would help you to be able to act more prudentially with the required care and forethought. In likewise sequence, the virtues will advance and enforce a greater habitation of the following conduct:

* to be more aware and to act with caution and diligence
* to seize the moment
* embrace diversity and openness
* take an interest in others
* seek first to understand, then to be understood
* practice self-care
* be parsimonious and live with moderation
* live a fulfilling life
* work with serenity and great aims
* work at your future identity.

In identifying the '7 Prosperity Virtues', we were more temporal than cardinal in our consideration. We have focussed on those aspects of human life that if mastered would make you more mindful and prudential. In other words, to have the best 'heart' and best 'head' that would secure your long-term prosperity more than otherwise. For this reason, each of the virtues selected meets the following criteria:

* *Pre-exist.* The virtue's potential pre-exist. The virtue exists whether you practice the virtue or not. The virtue is always in potential.
* *Universality*. The virtue's potential is available at all times and under all related circumstances.
* *Efficiency*. The virtue is a good elixir that cures or redirect incorrect human behaviour or thought processes.
* *Focus*. The virtue should lead to a specific state of being that is conducive to human prosperity.
* *Proficiency.* The virtue creates the disposition of heart and head whose presence in an individual person would tend to increase the person's excellence and calm proficiency in pursuance of human prosperity and to thrive and flourish in a

changing world, and whose absence would tend to diminish the possibility.

The full potentiality of the '7 Prosperity Virtues' are available to any sensible and reasonable person who masters and practices them, and will resultantly establish a positive pattern of behaviour or tone of temper that will be most responsive, firstly, to the trends of the changing world, and secondly, bringing greater steadiness, reliability, coherence and integration to the core competencies and the *7 Habits* as identified for sustainable prosperity. None of these virtues that we have selected and shared are meant to condemn you but rather to capacitate you to live a more excellent and prosperous life in future. We wrote this chapter mindful of the fact that virtues serve as a guide to ourselves, as well as to help you to boost your endeavours to face a changing world in a way that would ensure longer term prosperity. We admittingly are falling short of strict adherence to these virtues ourselves, but our attempt to master them has made us better persons to live a more befitting life and enjoy and share in the universal prosperity. It is our hope that you will gain some benefit out of it too!!

See it this way. Virtues are like arrows in your quiver, and you will be able to choose which one you will use concurrent to the purpose. Or perhaps more illustratively, you could view the '7 Prosperity Virtues' as an ecosystem, where many conditions are interconnected and required at the same time to be truly prosperous and to thrive. Accordingly, the '7 Prosperity Virtues' are considered as *principal virtues* or the first in order of importance and effect. Other virtues that simultaneously advance human excellence are viewed as *influencing virtues.* In some of the discussions of the principal virtues, we have highlighted the influencing virtues, especially in instances where the unison is very strong. Finally, we have kept the discussion simple and the recommended steps you may consider have been presented in a very practical, real and simple way. After all, virtues are not real and practical unless they are simple to master and easy to apply.

But, before we start with the first virtue, we have to show out the strategic sensitivity of virtues for human prosperity.

In order to understand the role and functions of virtues, we have to understand virtues in terms of their cause and effects, in other words, the beginning and the end of virtues. The reason being that virtues are like points of reference by which we can judge our desires, passions and our conduct impartially. What our conduct ought to stand for, or whether our passions exceed fairness or reasonableness or showing defects like being indifferent and cool or distant. What our conduct ought to stand for and the correctness of our passions and desires have to resonate with the referential power of virtues. It is this referential power of virtues, as it will become more clear in the exposé to follow, that is given for the direction of our conduct. We will therefore find that virtues are given for the direction of our conduct by determining the merits and demerits, and we shall find that every virtue and every vice naturally meets with its proper reward. It seems wisely ordered that the principles and rules from which human conduct arise have a great effect upon human sentiments, passions, desires and therefore our conduct and preferences.

In this exposé, we will follow the following rule of inference to avoid ambiguities. The reason being that virtues are much more than behavioural responses. Virtues are situationally and strategically far more sensitive. Virtues are external to human rationality but through habitual reasoning become an intrinsic part of the human constitution. Therefore, we have elected not to 'jump in' and begin this chapter with an explanation of individual virtues. There are so many virtues and we are of the humbled opinion that, by laying out the hermeneutical cause and effects of virtues, you as the reader would be much better off to further explore the beauty and blessedness of virtues, all within your own time. However, we will conclude this exposé by giving a broad outline of seven virtues. How did we get to these seven virtues, you may ask? We have asked ourselves what the dispositions of heart, mind or character are whose presence in an

individual would tend to increase the persons excellence in pursuance of prospering and that will empower a person to thrive and flourish during the transformative years ahead and whose absence tends to diminish that possibility.

Let's revert back to the rule of inference that we will follow in this chapter. In the first two sections, we will explain the role and functions of virtues metaphysically. This means that virtues are innate to the intrinsic finality observable in nature. Virtues are also metaphysically part of the telic orientation of humans. In other words, virtues provide a normative standard to judge human conduct and by the grace of Nature, humans are guided and pointed metaphysically to rather pursue virtues than vices, and reward virtues with recognition and admiration, all in all, in pursuance of human prosperity and wellbeing. We will then proceed to explain that virtues are good operative habits that establish a 'mean' or standard reference point to guide humans towards human prosperity and wellbeing. We will then touch on the exemplar of virtue. We will argue that the beauty and beatitude of virtues are predetermined by a first cause that is antecedent to the nature of virtue. This section will be followed up with an elucidation of the telic end of virtues which we infer is human prosperity and wellbeing. All these facets of virtues are granted, far more complex and intricate than what we can justifiably attend to for the sake of brevity. But we are hopeful that this broad and succinct outline of the role and functions of virtues in the metaphysical as well as existential realm of human existence could provide some rationale for our inference that virtues would perfect our endeavours. Or if you wish, round of the core competencies and habits that we have expounded and presented as prerequisites to prosper and thrive in the transforming world that we are now encountering and will have to face up to in the next 25 years or so. The exposé would hopefully explain our inference that virtues would, if duly mastered, bring a different dimension to the core competencies and habits in a sense of making our endeavours more steady, regular, joyful and discerning. Let's start at the beginning and

expound the intrinsic finality that is evident in nature and then move to expound the role and functions of virtues as part of the telic orientation of humans.

■ Intrinsic finality

The starting point for understanding virtues, its cause and effects is to understand the intrinsic finality innate to nature. Because, as it will become more apparent, the universe has the means to direct the end which nature intended to produce. We therefore need a clearer understanding of how general and metaphysical good gets determined through the intrinsic finality observable in nature. This then is the content of this first section. In this section, we will expound the intrinsic finality of nature or differently said, the observable fact that nature acts with certain ends in mind and that virtues have an intrinsic role and function in this process. Adam Smith, way back in 1759 in his seminal work *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* sees it this way (Smith 1982):

> In every part of the universe we observe means adjusted with the nicest artifice to the ends which they are intended to produce. (p. 338)

Nature acts for an end and has the means to direct the universe to those ends. For instance, nature has rules for preserving and increasing prosperity. Nature has laid down rules, if duly followed, that provide a harmonious order in which humans can flourish and thrive. Nature has not only endowed humans with the desire, passion and appetite for the means by which these ends can be realised. Nature, it will be argued, endows humans with an appetite for the means through which these ends can be brought about and naturally endow humans with an aversion for the opposite ends.

What is very important, is that nature did not leave this to the slow, uncertain and at times ambiguous determination of human reason. Nature bestowed in humans an immediate and instinctive desire and approval of that what is befitting and suitable to attain human prosperity, as we will later on argue, to be the telic end of virtue. For instance, nature has laid down rules, and the desire

within humans, for constantly improving their conditions of wellbeing. In the natural cause of events, nature created certain liberties by which each person is the best judge to promote the end for the person itself. However, though nature, provided these liberties through immediate and instinctive judgement based on the principles of self-love, it also provided a remedy to deal with the delusions of self-love or in general etymology, human selfishness and rapacity. This nature achieved by directing our self-interested and psychologically individualised actions in ways that give rise to social benefits. What this means is that nature directs our instinctiveness, our hunger, thirst and passion, not only to benefit the individual person but by instilling in the human psychic, the innate awareness that each person stands in need of each other. Nature formed humans to live in society and nature also formed humans with mutual kindness that is necessary for the attainment of mutual prosperity. Humans therefore have a mutual love for society and nature provides the means for humans to preserve the union of humankind by having an innate desire to support fellow humans and even to assimilate ourselves to others. Even more fundamentally, the orderly and prosperous state of humankind within society is agreeable to all humans. Even amongst robbers, this comradery is evident. All this is independent of customs and human reasoning.

There is a uniformity of pattern, a blueprint that nature has laid down as briefly described aforesaid, that is suggestive of an intrinsic finality evident in the universe and *Virtues are the foundation of that order*. The referential power of virtues creates an order that gives rise to human coexistence and prosperity. In a society, the members are bound together by a bond of love and affection. They are therefore drawn to one common centre of mutual prosperity. It is by virtue of self-command and prudence that we give up immediate gratification for a greater reward in future. If we have to temper pleasure and common passions, we have the virtue of temperance. When we as individuals and society should persevere, we have the virtue of fortitude. Likewise, by the virtue of empathy, we adjust our own personal selfish

desires to be in accord with the societal demands for mutuality and coexistence. The same can be said about the virtue of beneficence by which we take care of the wellbeing of those in our circle of influence. These are but a few examples that are suggestive and illustrative of the cause and effects of virtues in advancing the intrinsic finality in the universe and the emergence of a uniformed pattern of conduct. Virtues that are laid down, hermeneutically considered, therefore are intended to promote the perfection of our human conduct, by guarding against poverty and misery. Virtues are laid down to tend equally to the prosperity and the perfection of the great system of nature. This way nature completes the plan, which nature intended in the first instance. More precisely, by the law of nature, virtue awards everyone according to the works which he or she has performed in this world. This is achieved by energising the human spirit to expect a beneficial outcome. A beneficial outcome that transcends present assessment of experiences and supporting human's innate desire to better conditions of living. In pursuance of virtue, we are rewarded with something greater, more beneficial and more beautiful. For instance, it is by the virtue of prudence that the prudent person protects his or her dignity and ease of life in future. It is through the virtue of justice that we refrain from causing harm to the dignity and estate of others, and are rewarded with admiration, respect and acknowledgement. The same can be said about the virtue of thriftiness and industriousness. It is the thrifty and industrious person that captures the rewarding opportunities in life and the person that possesses the virtue of empathy is the one who is recognised and honoured in the society. What in fact is perceived as natural is nothing more than the rules of virtues that render humans superior to every situation so that they can be excellent in conduct and by the grace of nature protect their dignity, achieving prosperity, and allowing them to thrive and flourish. Most importantly, to protect humans from adversity and calamities when they do strike, the virtuous person has the tenacity, resolve, power and wisdom to deal with it in a manner that this also will come to pass in ways that bring

forth beneficial outcomes. Even under these circumstances, the virtuous person sees and enjoy the beatitude of life. This way we perceive a beauty in virtue. Even here, persons staying on his or her own will find his or her actions agreeable and rewarding on the account of the natural rules of virtue.

Considered hermeneutically, reviewing a lifespan of events that we will never fail to appreciate, virtuous conduct is always deserving of reward and the resentful conduct deserves punishment. We are therefore by the grace of nature prompted to reward virtuous conduct and prompted to refrain from what is resented. The reward most proper for self-differentiation and circumspection, thriftiness, industriousness and prudence is, as Adam Smith asserts, in his ethical theory of the commercial society 'success in every sort of business' (Smith 1982:166). Prosperity and external recognition are the proper recompense of the thrifty and industrious person. Likewise, the reward for promoting and practising humanity, justice and empathy are the confidence, the esteem and the love of those we live with (Smith 1982:166). You see, virtues do not rejoice in being rich and powerful, but in a much deeper divine dimension of humanness, namely, to be *trusted* and *believed* – recompenses that the rules of virtues always give birth and life to.

The rules of virtues are therefore formed through cause and effect. For instance, the prudent person is supported and rewarded, and the person consumed by selfishness and rapacity is resented and refrained from. It is from the beauty of the rules of virtue from which human conduct arises. We will find that notwithstanding the disorder that the undiscerning person views all things and the calamities that indiscriminately affect human lives in this world, every virtue, without exception, naturally meets its proper reward. And, it seems wisely ordered that the rule of virtue and that of vice as the opposing force have a very great effect upon human sentiments, conduct and preferences. From our observation of intrinsic finality of the universe, it seems wisely ordered that it should be so.

A metaphysical understanding of the role of virtue in attaining the intrinsic finality that nature has laid out for this universe is therefore the normative nexus of our understanding of the rules of virtue. What does this mean? What it means is that the rules and principles associated with virtues are set up within us to be the supreme arbiters of all our passions, desires, choices and preferences. To superintend our actions and to guide us to what we can indulge in and what we have to refrain from. Likewise, to come to understand the duty to oneself and the duty to others. What is even more beautiful is that we have the desire to acquire and master the rules and principles of virtues because we find both comfort and consolation in virtues as well as confidence that revitalise the human spirit, which is all in all, very empowering and rewarding. The normative nexus of our appreciation of virtues is that whatever appears to be the proper object or effective cause of human prosperity and wellbeing deserves reward, and the proper object or effective cause of human poverty and adversity is resented and punished. We are therefore prompted to reward the principles, that we call virtues, that guide us to propensity and wellbeing and prompts us to refrain from that which will cause human poverty, which is given the name 'vice'.

There is accordingly a harmonious order of nature, under divine guidance and integral to the intrinsic finality of nature, which promotes the prosperity and wellbeing of humans through the operation of individual propensities as guided by the referential power of virtues. It is by the referential power of virtues that human conduct including human passions and preferences are guided towards an equilibrium which is generated and upheld as part of a divine order. The universe in our assessment embodies a rationality that is therefore more than the rationality of human capabilities (Smith 2016:328). What is apparent is that the harmonious order is not the product of conscious planning and design on the part of human beings but substantial processes playing out at the micro level of individual human action (Smith 2016:327).

The ancient Stoics presented a picture, to which we subscribe, of the universe as a gigantic rational organism in whose rationality we all share as human beings (Becker 2017:xiii). This view resonates the idea as proposed by Adam Smith (2016:321) that the universe is a spontaneous, yet rational order that advances human prosperity and liberty in which the 'invisible hand', a term Smith used to describe God's wisdom as the Author of Nature, is constantly at work (Smith 2016:321). In the greater scheme of the universe, Smith argued that the system of liberty already existed, and it just needed to be 'detected' and allowed to operate properly (Smith 2016:331). This is a build-in ordering principle, which, if it is not distorted, will have the general prosperity and wellbeing as its outcome (Smith 2016:309). The prosperity and wellbeing of humankind seems to have been the original purpose intended by nature. It is upon the tolerable observance and obedience to the principles of virtues that human prosperity and wellbeing depends. It is by the neglect of the rules of virtues that the individual person and society would crumble and not being able to enjoy the full potential of nature. That our regard to the principles of virtue ought to be the supreme rule of our conduct, passions and preferences can be doubted by nobody who is desirous to be prosperous, flourishing and thriving.

From our perspective, a nature invested with finality is very meaningful and does not lack moral status of its own. It is our contentment that the natural order and then more particularly the principles of virtues are not ethically neutral. There is indeed harmony and beauty in a virtuous life, even if we as humans struggle to observe and experience it many a time. The finality intrinsic to nature therefore opens up the possibility to reconciling human autonomy and endeavours to improve conditions of wellbeing, with divine heteronomy (Austin 2017:94). All working in harmony and in symmetry to advance the ends that nature has prescribed. Inference to the best explanation, human propensities, the principles of virtues and the causal end are indicative, in fact, is *a confirmation*, of the providential thesis underlying nature.

However, humans are merely efficient causes of nature's plan. Only the Divine Architect to which is given the universal name of God, as the Author of Nature, is cognisant of the full meaning of the events in progress (Smith 2016:327–328). The intrinsic finality that is innate to creation is not by any means intentionally designed and deliberated regulations and rules of engagement on the part of human beings. The fact that human beings in a sense share a certain similarity with the universe's rational agency, *the universal hegemonic*, as the Stoics argued (Becker 2017:157), is indeed a source of confidence and satisfaction. Taking a cue from the Stoic line of thought (Becker 2017:157), humans ought to find solace in following virtues when life is going badly because this is meaningful and rational as it adheres to the divine purpose in the universe as a whole. That much alone could be enough to embrace the eminent beauty of virtues itself and ought to motivate a hymn of praise (Becker 2017:157). For us personally, this is significant, may we say, both spiritually and philosophically. Even though we do not entirely comprehend the cosmic intrinsic finality and even though the cosmic purposes may even be incomprehensible, we find it to be a source of solace. Because in some sense we can always expect a beneficial outcome by being obedient to the principles of virtue. But perhaps of even greater importance, knowing that we co-operate with God and so advance, as far as it is within our limited rationality and comprehension, the plan of Providence, by being and acting like God's vicegerents. The reverence to the importance of the principles of virtues is still further enhanced by appreciating the principles of virtues as being the commands and laws of the Author of Nature set up deep in our human constitution. Yes, indeed principles by which we can direct our conduct, passions and preferences as free actions of humans.

In a way, if we may say so, we enter into the sentiments of God and share, by mastering the principles of virtue, in God's unalterable perfections. Upon the tolerable observance of the principles of virtue, we share as vicegerents in the rationality and prosperity of God. But by acting against the principles of virtue

as laid down for our conduct we fail to acquire connatural wisdom, love and power required to share in the intrinsic rationality and prosperity of the universe. As such, we seem to obstruct the intrinsic finality and the beatitude of creation by neglecting to master the principles of virtues. Our approach to virtue, therefore, is that virtues and the associated principles and its causality are intrinsic to human life and then in particular the advancement of human prosperity and wellbeing. In this way, our approach is a sort of Panglossian view of life founded upon the universal hegemonic or virtuousness. But we may also construct by deduction, the rationality and beauty of the principles of virtue by having a closer look at the telic orientation of human beings. This will be the purpose of the next section whereafter we will give a brief outline of virtues as good operative habits.

■ Telic orientation of humans

In the aforesaid, we expounded the idea or rather doctrine of *Intrinsic Finality* and the causality of virtues. Essentially what we have tried to layout in a very broad and succinct way is that nature has determinable ends and by the grace of Nature, it has the means to direct the universe to those ends. In the human dimension of creation, we argued that humans are directed and guided by the principles of virtues to be prosperous, flourishing and to thrive in this world. We also argued that by the grace of nature, virtues are always rewarded in order to encourage and to ensure continual engagement, and the opposite force of vice is resented in order to protect humans against poverty and calamities. Within the context of the doctrine of *Intrinsic Finality*, humans are only an efficient cause in the process and the final cause is essentially and temporarily the first cause as the process of intrinsic finality moves from finality to finality, from goodness towards goodness and from prosperity to prosperity. In the brief exposé on the doctrine of *Intrinsic Finality,* we therefore assert that virtues have a referential power, in other words, that we can refer to the principles of virtues to guide us to prosperity and to

help us to refrain from vices that cause destruction, disintegration and disharmony and ultimately poverty of mind if not poverty in an existential context.

The doctrine of *Intrinsic Finality* has been our first point or even better, our starting point to explain the cause and effects of the principles of virtue. We will now proceed to look at the cause and effects of the principles of virtue from a different angle, namely the *telic orientation of humans.*

In essence, the subject matter of this section will be how human being's constitution is benevolently designed in order to be virtuous in their endeavours to achieve prosperity and to flourish and thrive in this world. On its own, the subject matter deserves far more attention than we can award. The subject matter is complex, intricate and in our attempt to be succinct for the sake of brevity, we expose ourselves to ambiguity, something that is regrettably unavoidable. But, we are of the view that even a small treatise on the subject manner may hopefully be indicative of the metaphysical causality of virtues and the importance of virtues in guiding human conduct, passions and preferences towards the terminus of universal benevolence or the goodness and beatitude of the universe.

To avoid some ambiguity that may creep in, we have elected to give up front a broad outline of our system of thought. Hopefully, this may offer a clearer picture of the rule of inference that we hope to follow. Firstly, the exposé starts by making the point that we have to recognise the duality and fallibility of human conduct. Human beings are one of division and from those contradictions is born the 'self' that is constantly within each one. Essentially humans are made out of 'malleable material' because humans in their constitution are neither animal nor divine. This forces humans to divide themselves between different impulses. This would be the second point of inference – the conflict between self-interest and societal interest. Humans are divided between self-love and duty towards others. Therefore, in the third place, we have to recognise the importance of human emancipation

and sociability that need not be in conflict but rather possess the nature of being symmetrical. If founded on the principles of impartiality and proportionality as defined through the principles of virtues, the conflict or duality can be normalised and could be in harmony and quite well balanced. The fourth point to expound is how do we bring harmony, unity and balance between our own self-love and our desire to be beneficial and perfect to society. Again, here the answer by the grace of nature is vested in the desire for perfection itself. But more about that later on. Fifthly, to bring harmony and unity between ourselves and others requires a very realistic human anthropology to synchronise societal demands and preferences with self-interest founded on self-love. Again here, by the grace of nature, humans are not left without a proper means. The answer to this challenge, in all of humans, is that there exists in every person's mind an idea of exact unity, harmony, balance and propriety. Though the idea or image is not equally exposed or visible because of many defilements at the hands of the contrary force of vices, it cause undiscerning and uncontrollable human beings to be embroiled and engaged in immoral or wicked behaviour. This idea or image of exact propriety and approbation in the minds of each person is not an imagination or a narrative of human descend. There is a universal foundation for this archetype of perfection or idea of exact unity. Without giving the plot away, virtues and the associated principles are intrinsically part of this archetype, as vicegerents within us. What this implies, and that would bring us to the next point, is that there is a logical relationship between the telic orientation of humans or the principle that humans are end-directed, the content being not to finality but rather from finality. In this process, the development of objective standards for oneself and the pursuance of self-perfection are intrinsic. This would bring us to the final point that the human constitution is benevolently designed in order to favour the principles of virtues and rescind the force of vice in our endeavours to prosper, flourish and thrive in this world. All in all, and we have to state it upfront to avoid any ambiguity, the principles of virtue constitute the

archetype of propriety and approbation that guide human conduct, desires and preferences towards prosperity – the telic end of human existence. But more about that is given in the last section with the heading 'Telic end of virtues'.

Let's start at the beginning.

■ Human duality and fallibility

Human beings are one of division caused by human's duality and fallibility. Despite the unchanging or immutable universal constitution of human nature, human nature is dual and fallible. It is this duality and fallibility that would seem to be the cause that all human beings, however wise and virtuous, are likely not free from some degree of discomfort and anxiety and are always challenged to make choices, one way or another. Our lives, because of the choices we make, could exacerbate the division already inflamed by our entrance to this world. Our nature and the nature of our world together pull us in multiple directions and often all at once. From these contradictions and divisions is born the 'self' that we constantly experience within ourselves. Even our 'self' exhibits a certain division, but the beauty is that in this state of division and discomfort, we as humans grow. Therefore, we have to understand and acknowledge the competing obligations and the necessary affects it has on our own 'self'; the decisions we take and the life and worldview that we each, all within our own time and comprehension, develop.

Let's expound a few examples of this mixed and dual nature of human beings. Essentially, the duality begins with our self-love on the one hand and the emotions we have, on the other. There are evidently some principles in human nature that direct humans to care for themselves and we do not have to be ashamed of it. We also have an interest in the prosperity and wellbeing of others. In this duality or division, immense beauty is incapsulated. Nature has prescribed to humans that in order to be able to care for others and feel for others, we must in some measure be at ease with ourselves. It is intrinsic to human existence that we have to

be in love with oneself and care for ourselves, to naturally seek our own improvements and to better our conditions of living. But by the grace of nature, we can only do so sustainably and wholistically by meeting the desire, passions and preferences of others. Self-interest is therefore not the only principle of human action. This fundamental aspect of human existence has been recognised by Adam Smith as part of the ethical theory of the commercial society of which we are all part of. In the very first sentence of his seminal work *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith (1982) wrote:

> How selfish soever man [*sic*] may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his [*sic*] nature, which interest him [*sic*] in the fortune of others and render their happiness necessary, to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing. Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others, when we either see it, or made to conceive it in very little manner. (p. 9)

The happiness and prosperity of others are therefore according to this assertion, an intrinsic part of our own happiness and prosperity. This is evident of the true nature of humankind that is more mixed.

At a much deeper level of the human constitution, the duality persists. Here even self-love is multiple. Humans desire not only to *be loved* but to *be lovely*. To *be praised* but also to *be praiseworthy*. Likewise, humans naturally are adverse to the idea of *being hated* but strive to *avoid to be hateful*. In a similar way, humans not only like to be approved of but have a desire innate to their constitution *to be what ought to be approved of*. In the first class, humans are constituted towards self-love that is to be loved, to be praised and to be approved of. But in the second class, humans are directed to become really fit for being of service to others. By having the desire to be lovely, praiseworthy, what ought to be approved of and resented to be hateful, a human's constitution is benevolently designed to not only take care of oneself in a self-loving way but also to care for oneself in order to be really fit to care for others.

Hence, constant effort is needed on the part of humans to be ethically and morally fit for this world. In a very delicate or precise way humans are directed and guided, but not forced, to divide ourselves between different impulses in order to achieve, not merely individual prosperity and wellbeing but also societal prosperity and wellbeing. This process is so subtle that more often than not, we do not even realise that our own drive to self-betterment and self-perfection in fact is mutually and universally benevolent. All of this poses a profound challenge. This duality creates problems and challenges as humans by the grace of nature always live in society. Our lifelong challenge is to respond and 'handle' this duality in ways that still enables us to maintain some apparent form of unity, balance and harmony within ourselves and in relation to the universe and notably other human beings.

How do we achieve a degree of symmetry as two different roads, two different challenges and two different pictures are presented. The answer is simple. By the grace of nature, we are guided to a middle way founded on the noble principles of virtue that changes our character for the good so that we may be liberated from the duality and fallibility and gradually move towards a more balanced and unified approach to life's challenges. For human beings to become more proficient agents requires objective standards to guide individual conduct, desires and preferences to unity and steadiness. Nature once more has devised means by which individuals might gain greater symmetry in their lives and thereby stabilising a means of living that render us at once good for ourselves and good for others. To take us closer to the answer, we have to begin by embracing the division and secondly to recognise the importance awarded by nature to both *human emancipation* and *human sociability.*

☐ Human emancipation and sociability

All capable and conscious human beings living on this planet wish to ensure their ease of life, to live well, be joyful and having

a piece of mind and enjoy the power of tranquillity. This is natural and in conformity with human nature. Yet, this we have to achieve, not in solitary or being a recluse or hermit, but as humans living in society. Humans have to achieve emancipation or differently said achieve self-realisation in a social context that requires a certain degree of sociability. Aristotle (385 BC–323 BC) way back in 335 BC in his school, the Lyceum, taught the theory that humans are naturally social or what Aristotle termed 'zoonpolitikon' – a man without society cannot have a sense of good or bad (Smith 2016:141).

In 1759, Adam Smith resonated this averment by so eloquently stating the following (Smith 1982:163): 'If I am not for myself, who will be? and if I am not for others, who am I?'

What this is saying by implication is that human beings need to engage socially in order to become fully emancipated. This is intrinsic to nature. But here, by the grace of nature, humans are not left weak and vulnerable. Because a human being needs to live in society for his or her own prosperity and wellbeing, Nature has hardwired gregariousness into human's constitution. Humans are 'made' if we may say so, to be fond of company and to be sociable. Because humans have to live in society, humans are born with a kind of affection to the whole which the person is part of. This innate and telic orientations of humans are not because of rational deliberation and calculation on the part of humans. The means of survival and more evidently the means to prosperity or human emancipation was not discovered by human reason. This is because of the constitution of nature. We are indeed empowered with social sentiments implanted in our nature as deeply as the appetite for food and sex. Likewise, we have various social desires as mentioned earlier such as the desire of being believed, the desire of persuading, and the desire to directing others (Alvey 2004:341). We are therefore 'programmed' to the ends of both human emancipation and human sociability. It is in this process that a dynamic social interaction arises, a kind of ethical exchange of affections that adjusts our feelings to

reach a point of mutual accord where emancipation can be reached within and with the assistance of others. It is in this way, for the judgement of ourselves and others, or even more importantly, for our own emancipation and those of others, that external general rules and principles of behaviour emerge in society. In other words, to strike a balance between potentially conflicting efforts for human emancipation and our innate social sentiments and desires to be fit for society, humans are guided and steered to search for universal external objective standards that transcend not only individual self-love, but are even much more universal and transcends culture, history and even what is considered 'fashionable' or what may also be seen as public opinions and prejudices.

What we essentially argue in favour of, with this brief exposé, is that moral sentiments and ethical standards gained through societal interdependence driven by human desire for emancipation are intrinsically normative, because it exceeds public opinion and prejudices. The content of our moral sentiments always includes reliable expectations about responses by others and a benevolent outcome if the principles are virtuous in character or a malevolent outcome when the opposing force of vices lead to immoral or wicked behaviour, whether this is in pursuance of human emancipation or finding its way in the expression of sociability. Here once more, the principles of virtues, as good operative habits, are the principal foundation upon which humans can construct a middle way that is most noble and benevolent. The principles of virtue provide the means to establish a fair, reasonable and proportionate *mean* that is neither excessive nor defective. Where human emancipation leads to neither excessiveness nor is a constraint or postpones by defectiveness. Likewise, where human sociability is not defective in pursuance of human emancipation, neither the cause of excessiveness that leads to selfishness, vanity, domination, exploitation, to mention but a few vices that are abhorrent, dishonest and repulsive.

This brings us to the third aspect as laid out in our initial rule of inference.

☐ We require a degree of unity

The question here is how do we bring harmony, unity and balance between our selfishness if stated in the negative or if stated in the positive, our desire for emancipation, whilst we are innately desirous to be beneficial and fit to society. Essentially what we are trying to expound is how do we achieve a degree of unity and steadiness that respects our societal interdependence and our self-love and desire for emancipation. In the aforesaid section, we have argued that normative standards do develop in the ethical exchange of affections that balances a human's desire for emancipation of oneself and the innate social affection that allows us to become reliant upon our interdependence as a fundamental requirement for human prosperity. What is now before us is, how we achieve unity within us, as self-love and our desire for emancipation can lead to either harmony or deception, luckily not at the same time though.

Let's just summarise what we have articulated so far. Firstly, we have expounded the duality and fallibility of humans and the challenges that follow. Secondly, we have touched on the balancing act between human emancipation and our social affections for others and how, by the grace of nature we find a middle way. In the expositions, though briefly, we articulated the innate constitutions of humans that allow humans to naturally seek their own improvements and bettering their conditions of wellbeing. We have also articulated that humans are not the rampant egoists that Hobbes and Mandeville have pronounced on. We have asserted that the good opinions of others matter to human beings and by the grace of nature we have an innate or telic orientation that guides us to be really fit and purposeful for society. In other words, humans not only wish to be perfect in themselves but also perfect in the eyes of others and of even greater importance, to be perfect and fit to be of purpose to others. The question now is how do we achieve harmony and unity between these possible conflicting desires. Or differently said, how humans avoid the pursuit to perfection, or to use the term we used earlier, to achieve

emancipation and be set free and to be liberated from human duality and fallibility. At the most banal level, the question is how to avoid this pursuit of perfection from developing into selfishness, rapacity and alienation from others.

Here by the grace of nature, humans have not been created without the means to achieve what nature has set out from the beginning, namely human emancipation that allows for the greatest degree of prosperity and wellbeing. The answer to the question is the unique nature of the vision of perfection itself. The emancipation and therefore perfection or excellence of human conduct is in the other regarding principles or innate sociability that direct us to restrain our selfishness and to indulge our benevolent affections by feeling as much for others as we feel for ourselves. It is human's sociability and the other regarding principles that produce the harmony, unity and balance of sentiments and the passions which entail their entire grace and propriety. What we are essentially arguing in favour of is that self-perfection and our desire for liberation when properly pursued leads and guides us out of ourselves towards others. Self-perfection therefore substantially comprises greater love for others, as it is through the love of others and our desires, and ability to help others to be emancipated and prosper that we 'optimise' or rather perfect ourselves, our emancipation and our prosperity. By transcending our self-love that brings us closer to others and helping them to be liberated and prosperous, we become even more empowered, liberated and prosperous. It is behind this pursuit that lies the idea of the industrious and frugal person, argued Smith (2016:139). Most playfully, this intricate – innate process in the human constitution resonates so beautifully in the question that we often hear in the commercial society, 'How can I help you?' It is not from the benevolence of the trader that he or she approaches you but the innate disposition that the trader will be successful, flourishing and thriving when being of assistance to you. Self-perfection is therefore indispensable to social harmony and individual as well as societal prosperity in so far as self-perfection can alone produce such unity and balance.

The desire to pursue self-perfection is therefore an innate and telic part of human orientation and under the right conditions could lead to outcomes that are both benevolent and optimal. In this way, the pursuit of such efforts to better one's conditions of wellbeing, the advancement of human liberty and all endeavours to be worthy of praise are hardly an egocentric endeavour but rather the way God – the Author of nature has constituted human beings. Self-perfection or the desire for emancipation is nothing to be ashamed of and ought to be encouraged. Self-emancipation has an ethical foundation and is a benevolent part of the universe. The Greek philosophers in our view, rightly so, saw the precept of being concerned with oneself as the main rule for social and personal conduct and for the act of life.

But this requires a realistic human anthropology to create symmetry between the societal demands and preference and individual self-love and self-interested actions that spring forth from self-love. In other words, we can achieve a degree of unity between our self-love and the desire to be of purpose and benefit to others, without being either selfish or altruistic. This is achieved by being indifferent to our own concerns in order to reach an impartial point of view for the wellbeing of others and as such being unselfish. Again here, by the grace of nature, as will be more evident in the next segment, humans are guided by principles of virtue as an impartial referent that provides standards to judge impartiality, proportionality and reasonableness.

☐ A realistic human anthropology

What is at stake here? Humans remain embedded in a social context in which we hold each other accountable. Humans cannot escape from the lived experiences of their social context. But how can a moral self-develop despite the fact that humans are socially embedded and acquire emancipation that incorporates ethical dispositions free from social opinions, prejudices and preferences. Or are we essentially consequentialists and simply dictated by what transpires within the lived experiences in society.

Here nature once more guides us to develop for oneself realistic normative principles of conduct and judgement albeit within a societal context where the prejudices, preferences and beliefs of others are equally important and consequential. By the grace of nature, there are normative principles that can be detected within the constitution of humans and the rationality of the universe. Humans can develop their character as moral agents that offer answers to the challenges for the 'self' as experienced within a societal context.

Nature provides humans with two fundamental desires and passions with the purpose of becoming human beings with a realistic anthropology that is well within reach of each person. Firstly, humans are instilled with the same rationality as the rest of the universe to create *symmetry* or a median plane that resonates harmony, unity and balance whether in an existential, spiritual or philosophical context. This desire is antecedent to the second, namely *sympathy* that is needed to advance fairness, reasonableness, proportionality and equality. The second innate rationality is therefore the ability to feel *sympathy* towards fellow citizens and to simulate others in order to develop gradually the desire for realistic principles of conduct and judgement that provides for a decorum and an accord between human beings. These two principles work in unison. Our love of harmony, balance and unity that the etymological term 'symmetry' denotes, motivates us towards an effective and realistic simulation of other human beings by *sympathising* with them. Playfully, this is simply as the saying goes 'What will I do in your shoes' or what befall you, befalls me or what cause harm to you, causes harm to me. Or in another way, one simulates the other person by trying to appreciate his or her account on what has befallen the person observed. It is our inference that the account of *symmetry* and *sympathy* are very closely connected conceptions of human social-ethical nature that plays out in ways that define human morality. The *rationality of symmetry* and that of *sympathy* are fundamental to human sociability, prosperity and wellbeing. From our perspective, these

rationalities are not founded in the love for others but rather in a love of virtue and in particular an agent's desire that he or she in itself is virtuous. To contextualise this inference, we have to appreciate that human's innate disposition is to gain other people's sympathy and respect and at a deeper level, humans' telic orientation is not only to be loved but to be lovely. To be the natural object of love. Humans not only wish to be praised but to be praiseworthy. Likewise, to be believed and beloved. The first desire could only made him or her *feel* to be fit and deserving for love and praise which are not more than banal, instinctive and temporal. But it is the second class of desires that humans come to experience that renders them to become really fit for society and deserving of praise. It is this anxiousness innate to humans and the rewards that they experience from being truly virtuous that make them to fall in love with virtues. This in our view is an alternative grounding for self-love explanations of sociability. In other words, if one desires to pursue perfection and to socialise purely for one's own good, there is no integration and truly no self-perfection. But if we are desirous to be really praiseworthy and longing to be *beloved* and *believed*, we work towards being reality fit for purpose and that is to work towards the common good and the social bond between humans. Only then, the true principles of virtuousness will be desired and loved and, as we have asserted aforesaid, we then act as vicegerents of God and share in the divine rationality. Then the love for *symmetry* and the capacity to simulate others through *sympathy* are 'Newtonian' or a single overarching principal force that always recompense the virtuous, by rewarding or making amends for transcending oneself for the sake of greater prosperity. In so doing humans create an accord or social bond that ensures greater balance, unity and integration, as the word *symmetry* denotes, with the greatest degree of human prosperity and wellbeing under prevailing conditions. In this is vested human excellence and true rationality. Our love for virtues will always empower us to act excellently. If we struggle with gratification and pleasurable objects, temperance will provide us with the means to act

proportionally and suitably to the circumstances and conditions. If we need to preserve our dignity and desire ease of body, thriftiness and industriousness will lead us to acquire conveniences and amenities as required. If calamity strikes, the virtue of courage and perseverance will empower us with the resolve and the wisdom to find the beauty in the calamity and to overcome.

But this would require a reimagination of the 'self' that leads us to appreciate the equality of our interest with those of others. A reimagination of the 'self' that the 'self' is but one of the multitude in this universe. Genuine excellence thus consists in transcending our self-love, not neglecting it. As the word 'transcending' denotes, we have to go beyond the range or limits or surpassing our own egos and selfishness to discover a more realistic anthropology and impartial normative standards of living and standards of judgement way beyond our own and societal prejudices, preferences and aversions. This would be truly the most exalted we can become, as we draw on a powerful set of *deontic virtues* to guide our conduct, preferences and desires. The person of exalted nature and character then acts on principles of which an impartial referent could approve of. More about that in the next segment.

In pursuance of the rationality of *symmetry* and *sympathy,* individual distancing is required to claim objectivity and discovering a *good operative mean* or standard to judge. This is essentially how we could develop moral agency beyond and above our own and societal prejudices, preferences and aversions.

☐ Individual distancing

What is needed to be truly excellent and be considered amongst the most exalted, we have to close the gap between and to transcend the natural divide between our own concerns and our concerns for others. To bring harmony between our love for praise and our exalted desire to be praiseworthy. This is the third in a three-prong approach in the formulation of moral sentiment.

The other two are individual reasoning and the process of socialising. These two approaches are not entirely free of prejudice. In the first instance, we view our conduct and judgement through the glasses of lived experiences and what we perceive to be 'logic' and 'reasonable' which is essentially not objective as we see the world the way we see ourselves. In the second approach, we are deceived in our attempt to view our conduct and judgement through the eyes of the others or as other people are likely to view us. In this instance, we place ourselves amongst the multitude and rightly though do not consider our views, prejudices and preferences more consequential than any other. Though we 'try' to assess the fittingness of our conduct and preferences independently of our own conduct, once again, how we perceive the views of others are but objective. We have to correct both distortions as we can hardly rely on our own perspectives, prejudices and preferences, neither can we truly rely on the way we perceive and experience the views of others. Therefore, to truly act in an excellent and exalted way, individual distancing is required. In other words, we have to transcend both ourselves and the prejudice, beliefs and preferences of the society. Only then can we claim objectivity beyond ourselves and society to conduct, what is now known in contemporary ethics as a proper impartial *fittingness assessment.* The question is, what system is there that provides the capacity to stand against own and commonly regarded prejudices, preferences and beliefs in order to come to an independent ethical judgement. Here by the grace of nature, we once more are not left without the means to work towards human prosperity and wellbeing. Nature has provided us with the appropriate means and the innate natural desire to attain objective standard of conduct. Critics of character ethics often create an ideal picture of the autonomous individual with the focus on individual decisions and judgement (Smith 2016:340). This is true, humans do have a rational facility that enables them to make some assessment. But as already alluded to, this facility is not entirely reliable because it lacks impartiality, steadiness and reliability.

What then is the third dimension in the three-prong approach in establishing human morality and ethical standards of conduct. This third approach has a logical relation with the slightly thicker doctrine of *Intrinsic Finality*. To appreciate this logical relationship, we have to understand that in terms of the doctrine of *Intrinsic Finality*, nature works from finality to finality. The true beatitude and moral essence of life is not to be experienced in the future or in a different state of conditions, but rather pre-exist in creation in the present condition. The final cause is temporarily the first cause hermeneutically speaking. The unalterable perfections of the pre-existing Cause or what we call God as a universal concept can be experienced and relied upon in the present condition. We as humans, by the grace of nature, could experience the unalterable perfections of the pre-existing cause as there exist in the minds of all humans an idea or archetype of perfection and propriety. In other words, we can, by imitating this archetype or idea of perfection, create a world that has a similar appearance or qualities of symmetricalness, in other words that resonates harmony, unity and balance. Admittingly, this may be viewed as an *a priori* explanation, but in a later section we will deal with this averment. Suffice to state that, it is our inference that this is very natural to the universe. This archetype or idea of perfection is the *human conscience* that is deep in our constitution. It is what some call the 'voice within' or what Smith (1982:338, 397) referred to as the 'Impartial Spectator' or the 'imagined man within'. This philosophical construct of the *Impartial Spectator* form part of Adam Smith's spectator theory. But in our view the archetype of perfection is rather an *Impartial Referent*, or the One that refers or is referred to. This philosophical construct is suggestive of the great judge and arbiter of our conduct. The *Impartial Referent* plays an essential role in promoting symmetry in ourself through an internalised process of continuously referring our conduct, preferences and prejudices for an impartial fittingness assessment. In ethical and social situations, that require good judgement, the *Impartial Referent* 'plays' the role of a judge, dispassionately weighing the conflicting needs. The *Impartial Referent* as a

philosophical construct provides a dual process framework that consist of inter-temporal choices and secondly self-control. The inter-temporal choices are founded upon the principles of exact propriety and perfections and the second aspect of self-control is founded upon the degree of approximation to the idea of perfection or the qualities of the archetypical image that prevail in each person's mind. *In this regard, the rationality of symmetricalness provides corresponding ethical points, of which the connectivity are bisected by a unified simple narrative*. In this way, the inter-temporal choices and the degree of proximation of these inter-temporal choices to the archetypical qualities, are always consistent and without conflict.

By the grace of nature, this exact image or archetype is not merely a 'spectator' and do not only act in a dispassionate manner, but more as a divine artist. Just like a loving father would guide his offspring towards acquiring the qualities needed to take over the legacy. See it this way. A king decides to send his ambassador or vicegerent to create a new kingdom. The vicegerent will not be sent by the king without giving the vicegerent an exact image, masterplan or protocol that sets out the vision of the kingdom and rules of engagement that resonates the values and aspirations of the king. Once the vicegerent takes on the assignment, the king will stay in contact to continuously guide the vicegerent, without micromanaging, yet remain very mindful of the challenges that the vicegerent is confronted with. To refrain from micromanaging the vicegerent and to allow the vicegerent some free rein, the king continuously reminds the vicegerent of the pre-existing protocols and when required, offers guidance dispassionately and even pronounces on the decisions and conduct of the vicegerent. Likewise, all humans, at least conscious and capable beings, develop a lifelong journey between human reason and human rationality and the arbiter within, the *Impartial Referent* that like a divine artist, develops the person's character in order to stabilise it against the influences of the immediate context and to direct the person involved to achieve the greatest degree of prosperity and wellbeing. This is

the role of the *Impartial Referent* to help us to counteract the strongest impulses of self-love and calls us to account. In this way, the *Impartial Referent* is able to do what reason and philosophy cannot do.

By 'submitting' or 'referring' our conduct, prejudices and preferences, one can strengthen one's character and develop a conduct and pursue preferences that are not only up for scrutiny but resonate the unalterable perfections or qualities of God as the pre-existing cause. This is what is often referred to as 'acting according to my conscience'. If we really listen with reverential attention, we will not need casuistic rules to guide our conduct. Like the vicegerent of the king in our analogy, that can rely on the protocols that the king has provided, there are universal foundation for this idea of perfection and the idea of exact propriety that is not arbitrary. There is indeed a universal foundation within human's limited conception, that represents this archetype of perfection. If we allow the Divine artist to mould us to perfection, we would stand in need of nothing. *The universal foundation is what we understand as virtues and then more specifically, the set of deontic virtues and the principles associated.* Virtues as a monistic idea of exact perfection and propriety or the 'mean' as the objective standard is what the virtuous persons would orientate themselves towards. Virtues are the objective standard that brings unity and steadiness to our conduct, preferences and desires, and as such is a manifestation of the unalterable perfections of God as the first cause. The conception of virtues is therefore embedded in the final causal understanding of nature and the universe. Virtues therefore facilitates good operative mean that is consonant and vices dissonant to the nature of a proficient agency. Within each virtue, there is continuous interplay between excess and defect that is the effective cause that leads to symmetrical conduct that promotes unity, balance and integration. Virtues are therefore not a mere disposition to do good things in general. Virtues are principles that each has some weight in making decisions. Virtues are therefore situationally and strategically far more fundamental to

human prosperity. Through virtues, we achieve co-operative conduct that internalises and is transformative in character as a 'second birth' that is less physical and more spiritual and intellectual, although the outcome can have a physical dimension too.

What then is a good virtue? This is the purpose of the next segment. Suffice to conclude that virtues are certain dispositions of perfections or excellence where excellence refers to what is disposed according to nature as originally intended. Virtues should therefore not be understood or confused with behavioural responses acquired through readymade techniques. They are situationally and strategically more sensitive. Virtues achieve the completion of human nature and if mastered with reverential commitment would be rewarded with true prosperity and allow us to flourish and thrive. Without virtues, human beings cannot attain the rational human good to which humans are orientated by the grace of nature. Virtues are the instruments that the Divine artist uses to create the best you that you can be. The purpose of virtue is therefore the formation and even the transformation of the human agent to become most excellent and proficient.

In this way, virtues work similarly to deontological principles. Virtues are steady, end centred and free of conflict. In this context, virtues are good operative habits that are intrinsic qualities connected to a prosperous life. All in all, virtues are nature directed and intrinsic to the ends that nature has laid out from inception. Virtues empower us with connatural wisdom, love and power that allow us to maintain a distance from our own and societal prejudices, preferences and believes. Virtues allow humans to view life from an impartial perspective in order to come to a less partial judgement of what is right, wholesome and consonant with the archetype of perfection that is instilled in the human constitution. In a more particular sense, virtues guide us to exact propriety and empower us to apply self-differentiation and self-discipline in order to achieve the exact consonant or approximation to the archetype of perfection that are held out to

achieve an exalted character. This way, virtues guide us to become prosperous and enjoy the highest degree of wellbeing according to the circumstances, age, time and desire.

☐ The human constitution is benevolently designed

We started off this section with the heading 'Telic orientation of human' as we are of the view that the human constitution is benevolently designed in order to be virtuous in all of human's endeavours towards prosperity. The rule of inference that we have followed to argue in favour of the aforesaid deduction is that a healthy human agency can become organised through the interaction and recurring processes that nature has laid out for humans to achieve the ends that by the grace of nature, which is most evidently in favour of human propensity and wellbeing. Nature has constituted human's practical intelligence and wisdom in ways that humans could subordinate vices to virtues in their desire to overcome human duality and fallibility. When humans have to overcome divisions and sort out conflicting interest, prejudices and preferences by the grace of nature, means are provided to humans to achieve a sense of unity, balance and integration that are most suitable to the conditions and to control their expressions in thought, conduct and desires. This we find very refreshingly realistic, and we personally are gaining tremendous confidence to know and experience it ourselves how the conception of virtues fit into what we know about the development, psychological complexity and ethical constitution of human agentic activities.

Furthermore, we are personally convinced that the internal constitution, by the grace of nature, is evolving in a morally ordered and benevolent ways to achieve the maximum prosperity and wellbeing at all times. We also personally draw a lot of strength through knowledge and practical experiences how virtues and the associated principles guide the human constitution not only to a benevolent outcome but most importantly implant in the human constitution the unalterable perfections of God as

the first cause. So that humans can become by the grace of nature truly vicegerents that possess the qualities of the archetype or the idea of perfection that is innate in the constitution of humankind. This in itself confers on humans a great honour and dignity like a second nature. We therefore concur with Aquinas's assertion that states 'The sign that such a second nature has been acquired is the faculty of virtuous action' (Austin 2017:171).

Perhaps we have at this stage to reaffirm what we have previously alluded to, and that is that virtues are not to be understood as readymade behavioural response to stimulus. They are situationally more sensitive (Austin 2017:64). Virtues not only resonates God's unalterable perfections but are the key to human prosperity and wellbeing. Whichever virtues we master will determine our prosperity and wellbeing. This is indicative of the plasticity of human nature (Austin 2017:24). Virtues dispose us to be good vicegerents. Virtues dispose us to be excellent in constitution and virtues instil a divine beauty and competence within humans. However, though virtues are qualities of God as the first cause, virtues work not without us. Virtues are good operative habits, but it requires a reasoned habitation or 'mastering' on the part of humans.

◼ Virtue as a good operative habit

In the aforesaid two sections, we literally looked at the natural intrinsic cause and effect of virtues from a point deep in the constitution of this universe that we live in. Now we will move to come closer to the 'surface' by extending our exposé on the rationality and beauty of virtues. What will now follow in the next two sections will be a more descriptive tone of virtues as a good operative habit and then the mark of virtues that makes virtues distinctive and identifiable. These two sections will be followed up by a brief examination of the true exemplar of human virtue or the typical example of human virtue or what also may

be described as the typical or standard specimen of human virtue.

Let's revert to the issue at hand. Why do we consider virtues, as the heading depicts, *a good operative habit*. In our attempt to answer the question, we will touch on the following salient points. Firstly, what is befitting to live a full and prosperous human life. Secondly, how does virtues contribute positively to an ethical act. Whereafter we will expound the operative *mean* of virtue and conclude by answering the question whether the beauty of virtues is only vested in their usefulness.

What is befitting to live a full and prosperous life is the first point we wish to elucidate. To answer this question, we have to refer back to what Aquinas has observed. He has observed that principally speaking, every human being loves itself and so each human being has a natural inclination towards its connatural and fitting good (Austin 2017:133). Aquinas further argued that to this extent, the human will does not require any perfecting virtues. By the grace of nature, as we will explain in a follow-up section, humans are free agents. Essentially, we are free to do what we want, provided we are capable of handling the consequences as the constitution of this universe is founded on the rationality of cause and effect. But the more conscious and capable person would quickly realise that human's natural passions most often mislead us to desire what is beyond us and to strive for things in an unreasonable way. Likewise humans, because of the human fallibility, do things that are resentful and hurtful that gives birth to consequences beyond our comfort and desire for ease of body and mind. The core thesis for a fully fitting life is that those passions that have the tendency to easily anger and offend others and other conspicuous passions ought to be modulated and directed to unity and balance by moral virtues. The psychological unity and the integration of the virtuous person is achieved when the emotional responses are appropriate and in due balance to the situation. This is indicative that the virtuous person's emotional responses are in harmony with correct reasoning (Smith 1976:5).

Then the virtuous person knows what is to be done and acts from choice and not merely from passion and does so for a duly narrated end and acts firmly and immovably. Such conduct is then considered as prudent, tempered, just and resilient (Austin 2017:116). You see this narrated conduct founded on a narrative of virtuousness is a state of mind that is neither a feeling, a capacity nor a tendency to behave in a specific way. To act virtuously is a state of mind or the settled conditions we are in. In order to develop this state of mind and to be in control of the conditions of the time, human beings are constantly in need of normative direction and practically wise judgement in order to enjoy a befitting and prosperous life. This then is the role of virtues to provide the normative direction to bring unity, harmony and integration between our cognitive and the effective elements of human agentic acts. This way, a moral agent can be formed by living out a particular rational narrative. This is very much consistent with the views of Plato and Aristotle who argued that excellent ethical character involves more than a Socratic understanding of the good (Smith 1976:7). The rule of inference is that virtues establish a state, plane or conditions, suitable to good and excellent human conduct and makes humans to perform excellently. Virtues therefore help us to act with far greater reliability and steadiness. This is fundamental to the telic nature of virtues. Adam Smith in his analysis of virtues for the commercial society has articulated it so aptly. What he has said has been reaffirmed in our exposé on the intrinsic role of virtues as expounded in the first two sections. Adam Smith concluded his exposé on virtues by stating: '[virtues] are the principles which the Gods have given me for the direction of my conduct' (Smith 1976:59).

This then is the simple answer to the question, 'what is befitting to live a full and prosperous human life'.

But how do virtues contribute positively to an ethical act and how do virtues achieve harmony, unity and balance in human conduct, preferences and passions? This brings us to the second point.

To begin to answer this question, we have to take a leaf out of Aquinas's experiences and observations (Austin 2017:113). Aquinas argued that in easy matters anyone can act well in pursuing a fulfilling human, social and prosperous life. But to act well in difficult and challenging matters belongs only to the one who possesses virtues. We therefore need virtues, so that each person may perform perfect operations with the required excellence and promptness. In this sense, virtue is a quality proximately ordered to empower human operations (Austin 2017:38). Virtues are a principle of human act that perfect the rational power or faculty of human agency.

But why do we argue that virtues are a habit? Moral virtues are habits of obedience. Virtues are certain habits by which the 'appetitive power' as Aquinas puts it so aptly (Austin 2017:136) 'are disposed to obeying reason promptly'. Virtues are habits not because it generates automatic responses, but rather because it is a stable quality that perfects our capacity to act rational within the circumscribed frameworks that nature has laid out for humans to advance their prosperity and wellbeing.

Going back to the previous five chapters that were the prelude, we argued that the core competencies and the habits that we propose as a 'toolbox' to continue to prosper, flourish and thrive under the changing conditions are derived from rational deduction, and are perfected by virtue. The real essence of virtue in relation to the core competencies and habits as elucidated is that virtues empower humans to acquire greater sensibility to the events of human life so that a keen and earnest attention to the propriety and perfection of our conduct can evolve. This way virtues bring reliability, steadiness, clarity and integration to those core competencies and habits. As we have previously explained, virtues are always disposed to good operations and as such would help us to pursue with far greater excellence and proficiency those core competencies and habits required for the changing times ahead. Virtues are therefore the best and most laudable habit of humankind that always are rewarded with

success and prosperity. This is what is called the *good use thesis* of virtue, which is saying that the telic orientation of virtues is to good operations – true excellence in conduct and judgement.

But if, virtues are understood to dispose to good operations, what then is to be understood to be virtue's beauty and goodness? The best way to answer this question is to accentuate the point that virtues perfect the inclination of the human agency to harmony, unity and balance or as earlier explained to promote symmetrical conduct and judgement. Conduct and judgement that are proportional, reasonable, balanced, integrated with circumstances in time, space and age, and promote unity rather than disintegration, poverty and destitution, which are characterised by lack of dignity, meaning, purpose and comfort or ease of body and the means to provide for oneself and provide to persons in one's larger circle of influence. All in all, the beauty of virtue is essentially the positive and good effects on inward tranquillity and peace of mind that many others before us have chiefly celebrated (Smith 1982:307).

What then is the operative 'mean' of virtue that is the efficient cause of this beauty? The core doctrine of the 'mean' is the symmetricalness between the vice of excess and the vice of deficiency. Virtue is therefore vested in the rational 'mean' of not too little nor too much. We should strive to find the balanced 'mean' by identifying our own extreme and moving to the opposite. This would bring us to the proportional, correct and most pleasing proposition. The 'mean' is then to be understood according to the circumstances. This can also be described in this way. Sense of propriety or the 'mean' is when our passive sensations and our exertions are suitable to the time, to the age or to the situation of the person involved (Smith 1982:246). Or as Adam Smith (1982) asserts:

> [*W*]hen a person indulges in passive sensations or engage in excursions that cause a person to neglect either the person's interest or duty, it is justly blamed as excessive and hurtful to both the person and society. (p. 246)

What is at stake here and considered with a degree of resentment is not so much the power of the tendency to enjoy, as the weakness of the sense of propriety and duty (Smith 1982:246). Virtues in this way may offer a mode or 'mean' of reasoning or a rationality connatural to human prosperity and wellbeing. The rational 'mean' is determined by what is fitting in circumstances and not by quantity. The 'mean state' is not an arithmetic 'mean' but as Aristotle asserts (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2015:4), one relative to the situation. Admittingly, with the emphasis on the quality of virtue, the 'mean' of virtue is rather descriptive than prescriptive. However, considering virtues hermeneutically and being mindful of all other considerations, 'the mean' can be determined qualitatively by rational deduction of what is suitable, reasonable, balanced, integrated to the circumstance and conditions, what promotes unity amongst stakeholders, proportionality, symmetricalness and perhaps most of all what is beautiful or at least perceived to be beautiful, holistic and relatively free of conflict. This is but a few criteria that could be employed towards establishing 'the mean'. Surely much more can be added, but hopefully the point is clear that the rationality of 'the mean' is something immensely beautiful and liberating.

This brings us to a further point to be considered. Is the beauty of virtue only vested in its utility? Virtue's beauty, at least from our perspective, is much more than its utility. By the grace of nature, virtues and vices are upon every occasion bestowed with the precise reward in the case of virtues and punishment in the case of vices. Virtues always elicit love and admiration and always are deserving of reward. Likewise, vices are always odious and punishable. The consideration of these opposing tendencies, undoubtedly stamp a mark on virtues that is, in addition to its propriety, immensely beautiful. The same cannot be said about vice whose impropriety always causes deformity and resentment.

But, apart from its beauty in propriety, virtues come to be approved of, by virtue's telic nature and character. Virtues and the associated principles are intrinsic to universal benevolence and the ends provided by nature. This provides an additional

character to virtue as the highest wisdom and the most real exalted principle or rationale of conduct and judgement. This is indicative of the natural beauty of virtue. It can therefore be argued that what makes human conduct more smooth, easy and steady would derive a beauty from this effect and the contrary tended to obstruct human prosperity and wellbeing and as such would be displeasing and resentful upon that account. It can therefore be said about virtue as a good operative habit that virtue polishes and lubricates the wheels of society towards speedy recovery and prosperity, whilst vice is like the vile rust or the sand in our eyes that jars and grates upon one another and negatively impacts on our proficiency and distorts our vision.

Virtues are therefore something which is in itself more valuable for human prosperity and wellbeing as all other ethical principles. In fact, all other ethical principles and dispositions ought to be founded upon the rationality and beauty of virtues. Virtues ought to be pursued for their own sake. But more about that in the next section. Suffice to conclude that as an operative habit, virtue renders the virtuous better off than the person of excessive self-estimation that is intoxicated by the person's own wealth and greatness. To the virtuous, a much more exalted admiration is bestowed and is always rewarded with prosperity and good wellbeing.

■ Exemplar of human nature

What hopefully has become most evident in the analysis of the cause and effect of virtuosity or the 'taste for virtue itself' is that, by the grace of nature, there is an observable finality that is intrinsic in nature and that the telic orientation of humans are moving from finality to finality by the due application of the principles of virtue. In the process, the final cause is temporarily the first cause that guides human nature to the ends that nature has predestined, namely human prosperity and wellbeing. At least in as much as humans have been allocated a much smaller task in the greater scheme of things, well within the limited

comprehension and reason of human beings. Such is the effect of the good as directed by virtue and bad as the consequences of vice that human passions, desires and preference are directed and guided in ways that prompt us to promote human prosperity and wellbeing. By the grace of nature, humans have a love for symmetricalness and as already established, humans are appreciative of harmony, unity and integration as overarching narratives that ought to be pursued. By the grace of nature, virtues prompt us towards the end that nature has predestined. For instance, virtues prompt us to care and having sympathetic relationship with oneself to which is given the word *prudence*. Likewise, the virtues of *beneficence, justice* and *empathy* are recommended to encourage human's to be sympathetic to one another. In a similar vein, the virtues of thriftiness and industriousness empower and guide us to make the optimal use of our existential resources and to work hard with the necessary focus towards achieving prosperity and wellbeing. This way, by the grace of nature, principles that are most susceptible operating habits in achieving prosperity are pointing out the way which we ought to follow to create, first harmony with oneself and secondly harmony with others in society. Adam Smith in his account of virtue described it in this way: 'The bounty of that divine Being has provided him [*sic*] with virtues which render him [*sic*] superior to every situation' (Smith 1982:278).

The rule of inference that Smith has adopted in his examination of virtues most susceptible to success in all spheres of life laid out a wholistic approach to all the events of human life and at the end of the examination, he concluded that virtues as creational gifts from God – The Author of Nature that empower humans with divine wisdom, love and power that never leave humans unprepared (Smith 1982:278). As God as the First Cause never wish us to be miserable nor to be anxious, despondent or afraid, or whatever may be perceived as contrary to human prosperity and wellbeing, even here whatever may happen tended, by the grace of nature to the prosperity and the perfection of the whole including the virtuous. By the grace of Nature, no evil nor pain

and tension are admitted into the system, which are not beneficial to the virtuous person and that the virtuous person can willingly submit to without hesitation and sincerely and devotedly even have wished for.

What, in our view, is evidently clear from our examination of the intrinsic finality of nature and the telic orientation of humans is that by the grace of nature, certain principles as most susceptible operating habits are pointed out for humans to follow towards the attainment of human prosperity and wellbeing. *To these principles, as we have many a time alluded to, is given the name virtues.*

The question how virtues are brought into existence, as we believe, has been answered. The question now before us is the *exemplar* of this image or archetype of perfection that is present in every person's mind, though it has to be fully detected and mastered through likewise virtuous deeds. This image or archetype of perfection imitates and resonates a pre-existing exemplar. The vicegerent within us has a first cause. The rationale of an idea of perfection or archetype of perfection, that is within us, as *The Voice within*, is a form that imitates from the Agent who predetermines the end for itself. This means that the exemplary of divine symmetricalness that pre-exist is the primary principal of virtue. As Aquinas (2017) so aptly puts it:

> Since the exemplar cause is the Agent, end and form, virtue finds its origin; end and nature in its divine exemplar. (p. 77)

That the exemplar of human virtue does pre-exist in God and it is antecedent to human existence have been supported by many classical philosophers such as Aquinas, Augustine, Plato and Adam Smith. The exemplar is an extrinsic formal cause after which the image of perfections within is modelled. This image of perfection is not merely our imagination. Virtues exist in an exemplary original way as a reflection of the unalterable perfections of God. This means that humans, by mastering the principles of virtues, act with similar unalterable perfections that intrinsically allow human's conduct and judgement to move from

goodness towards goodness. The final cause is temporality, the effective cause, that works through humans as effective agents. Here we support Aquinas's (2017) rational deduction and conclusion which is worded as follows:

> The end, even though it was executed last, it is the first intention of the Agent. In this way there is cause as a rationale. (p. 98)

Following this rule of inference, God can therefore be seen as the cause and the subsistence of all other things and their reason for being. We therefore agree with Aquinas, Plato, Augustine and Adam Smith that the exemplar of human virtue does pre-exist in God as the Author of Nature. We support this inference and therefore it is our deduction from the evidence before us that if we follow the principles of virtues as God's vicegerents, we will live well, prosper, flourish and thrive.

Exemplar causation is very important in understanding the rationale, referential power and efficacy of virtues and the associated principles. It is through the mastering of these principles, as Epictetus(50AD–135AD) (Smith 1982:277) argued, and the gratification and sacredness we hold for the intrinsic finality and God's unalterable perfections that we as humans can rest with the most perfect security and share in the wisdom, love and power of the Great Superintendent of the Universe. This is a term that Adam Smith has used, which in our view describes God's guiding role so well. We can therefore, like in our allegory of the king and vicegerent, proceed from exactly the same vision, protocol and principles of engagement. Virtues therefore formally participate in the intrinsic perfections of goodness, harmony, unity and balance that is supernatural and that transcends human existence. Virtues equally participate in the same unerring wisdom, love and power that pre-destine the same universal and boundless benevolence that is the foundation of the universe we live in. Virtues and the associated principles are therefore more than our imagination and are intellectually and strategically far more sensitive and important. Virtues are real, yet prior to our existence, and emanate from God that 'reside' within each person

as the Impartial Referent or the Great Judge to whom we can refer our conduct and judgements in order to reach a more impartial judgement of our own conduct.

It is because of this intellectual and strategic importance of virtues that humans do develop an innate admiration for the moral exemplars of virtues and the associated principles. The virtuous person is therefore willing to submit his or her will to the Impartial Referent and is willing to sacrifice his or her inferior and most often selfish interest to the greatest interest of the universe of which God is the immediate Administrator and Director. When measured against the unalterable perfections of the Divine Being, humans, at least those who have a sacred regard for the intrinsic finality of this universe and find beauty in the principles of virtues, can feel but little in the presence of God and can but little confirm their own conduct in comparison to the principles of virtues. Yet, humans stand to gain so much confidence and proficiency as beings by the same sacredness for virtues and commitment to master virtues. To master the principles of virtue and to obey with the required sacredness and to live by the expectation of the benevolence and recompenses of virtue is the first rule of duty that we assert all humans ought to agree and commit to.

The magnanimous resignation and sacred commitment to the beauty and principles of virtue seem in any respect underlying human prosperity. But does it follow that humans are only pieces on the chessboard of life? Does it mean that humans are pushed and manipulated towards ends over which humans have no control nor any freedom to judge and choose? The answer is an unequivocal NO! Humans by the grace of nature do have an intrinsic and telic orientation to the ends that nature has predestined, yet humans have a choice. We are free agents that have an innate will of our own as much as we have an Impartial Referent within that is more than willing to guide and direct our conduct and judgement to become excellent. A nature that is founded on our *human* as well as or *divine* nature that truly transcends all other living creatures and that could make us the

master of this universe. Indeed masters, not in pursuance of our own kingdom, but rather in pursuance, within our smallest comprehension and responsibility, of our own prosperity and wellbeing. This again, is done, not in a selfish and rapacious way, but rather in support of being God's vicegerents in building towards His Kingdom. Regrettably, this may be interpreted as unscientific and exaggerated or overemotional. But, what we infer is that the principles of virtues are intrinsic to nature and intellectually and strategically most sensitive towards human excellence. All with the aim to become the best we can be, to live and work with calm efficiency and to enjoy the beatitude of life. But equally important, to be really proficient agents working towards representing and manifesting God's unalterable perfections – thereby participating in the intrinsic finality of nature. The controlling aim being to become independent of all suffering by being excellent in conduct and judgement and stand in need of nothing and whose happiness is complete in itself. All in pursuance of being proficient agents that not only fully enjoy the beatitude of life but effectively contributing towards promoting and manifesting the beatitude itself. *From prosperity towards prosperity* is the overarching narrative of the free agents we could become. Making this the sole purpose of action.

■ Telic end of virtue

We have now arrived at what undoubtedly is perhaps the most fundamental aspect of virtue. The question now before us is rather what the terminus of virtues within the greater scheme of things is? We have, for the sake of a systematic scrutiny of virtues, continuously referred to the terminus or telic end of virtue, as being human prosperity and wellbeing. We have now reached the point to define this single narrative end. This will be done by briefly re-asserting the doctrine of *Intrinsic Finality* and the role of virtue as integral to the doctrine. We will then jump into the question at hand, that is, what the terminus or telic end of virtue is. In the third instance, we will argue that prosperity and human

wellbeing is the one thing for the sake of which everything is done. Next, we will layout the parts wherein we state what the prosperity and human wellbeing consists of. Fifthly, we will assert that prosperity, as the telic end of virtue, is not alongside virtues but rather within virtues. We will then conclude by arguing that an *a priori* and an empirical explanation can be given for the telic end of virtues. Whereafter, we will shift the focus to those virtues that are considered as most fundamental in creating a temper of mind most suitable to the changing conditions emerging in the times ahead. The aim is to advance human prosperity during the time of change, that is characterised by uncertainty, velocity, search for meaningful experiences and a very diversified context to contextualise and operate within.

But let's go back to the beginning of this chapter.

From the beginning of this chapter, it hopefully became clear that the doctrine of *Intrinsic Finality* plays a central role in our thought process in identifying the role of virtues and the simple narrative or principled end. The idea that we pursue virtues is founded in the intrinsic finality and the telic orientation of humans. From our point of reference, nature intentionally guide human conduct and endeavours to create a harmonious order within which humans can prosper, thrive and flourish. In the execution of virtues as good operative habits, virtues are both metaphysically and existentially good. In guiding human deliberations, choices and conduct in that very effort itself, virtues define human excellence. Virtues provide us with connatural knowledge and wisdom to lead coherent and integrated lives. In this sense, virtues as good operative habits are an optimising exercise to bring harmony, unity and balance to oneself and secondly amongst all human beings. As Zeno of Elea who has been greatly influenced by Aristotle, Plato, Protagoras and Gorgias argued (Becker 2017:27) 'virtues provide us with connatural wisdom to live consistent and coherent lives, one in which no conflict occurs and that is unified by adherence to a single principle'. Indeed, a life that is characterised by symmetry and a single end. We also

attempted to briefly illustrate the 'mark' of virtue that is characterised by steadiness, sweetness, promptness and in fact overall harmony, balance and unity. Our assertion based on our examination of the account of virtue suggested that the telic end of virtue is to provide a narrative unity to human conduct well within human's narrow reason and moral responsibility. A single narrative much smaller within human comprehension.

The question then is, what is the terminus or telic end of virtue? Surely it cannot be to simply live coherent lives. Nor can it be to become effective agents with the end vested in moral law. It might be argued that the telic end is eudaimonia or as Aristotle has argued, a life of virtue (Boucher & Kelly 2003:76). Granted, this line of thought is very consistent with ours, but the question remains what is the purpose of Nicomachean Ethics (Boucher & Kelly 2003:74)? What does it consist of?

Before we can answer the question, we have to answer two preceding questions. Firstly, is virtue anything more than a means to an end? Secondly, have all virtues the same rational end? Let's start with the first. The task of virtue is to perfect our endeavours. In this regard, virtue serves as a means of various ends. Virtues are the means to the optimal integration and realisation of our ends. Virtues in this sense are necessary and sufficient for the proficient exercise of our agency or our humanness, even in adversity, because virtues empower us to realise our full agency or potentiality. We claim that the virtuous person possesses all that what is needed to fulfil the person's full potentiality, to live well and to have the person's desires satisfied in a rational and reasonable way. We therefore lay down the challenge that a life so constituted is what we all naturally desire or would desire if we are capable and conscious in order to fully grasp the benefits of virtues to ourselves as well as those who benefit from being the recipient of virtuous actions. In short, virtues are definitely the best means to human end. However, virtues have a beauty of its own that instil an innate desire to master virtues for its own sake. Virtues are manifestations of the unalterable perfections of God's

and by mastering these perfections we become partakers in God's grace, wisdom, love and power, as vicegerents. This is well beyond selfishly motivated action but founded on deeper principles of gratitude, awe, wonder and admiration that the grace of nature creates a new order, first inherently and second existentially. Virtues are therefore much more than a simple means to human ends. The second question is, have all virtues the same rational end? The simple answer is Yes! In so far as it participates in the attainment of a narrative unity that provides the circumscribed framework for human conduct to become most excellent. See it this way. It is observable in nature that there are many 'eco systems' as habitats for species to prosper, thrive and flourish. For instance, in nature, plant species require a balancing act of master proportion between various eco elements such as the pH balance, nutrients, water temperature, airflow, etc. These factors focus on individual elements for the plants to thrive. Some focus on root growth, others on the growth of the leaves, getting the point? The same applies to the principles of virtue, as virtues, in unison, create the right 'ecosystem' for humans to prosper, thrive and flourish. This is as simple as that. Just like gravity is considered as a 'Newtonian' principle of nature, virtues as good operative habits are also 'Newtonian' in nature and intrinsic to nature. However, as Aristotle had noted, the citizens of different cultures, religions and political systems will have different virtues in so far as the telos and ethos of each polis differ. For that matter, it also appears to be the case considering the changing conditions as time goes on. Like what we experience now with the unfolding trends. But these are only nuanced differences of the many unalterable perfections of virtue. For instance, the virtue of tolerance has a different nuance in times of war than in times of prosperity. Yet in all instances, tolerance as a virtue is unalterable and vital. Furthermore, Aquinas in our view rightfully distinguished two final causes of virtue, the ultimate end and the more immediate goal or target (Austin 2017:151). Take for instance the virtue of temperance. Temperance has both an overall end and a mere proximate target in its use of pleasant

things (Austin 2017:151). The end and the rule of temperance itself refer to what Aquinas (Austin 2017:151) reckons to be 'Beatitude'. But of the things that it uses, the end and rule is the necessity of this life, in other words, pleasurable experiences. As Aquinas argued: 'In the case of temperance, the target in its proper sphere of emotional attraction, is what is needed, rather than what is wanted' (Austin 2017:152). For this reason, temperate eating is guided by what is needed for health and socialising, not by 'transitory puckishness' (Austin 2017:152). The same rule of inference can be followed for all other virtues such as thriftiness, prudence, self-command, industriousness, self-differentiation, empathy, etc. Because virtues have an overall end and a more proximate target, all virtues work in unison just like constellations or plant 'ecosystems' that consist of a biological community of interacting organisms within their physical environment. Likewise, virtues provide humans with the proper 'ecosystem'.

But can the terminus of all our virtues conducted over our whole life be collapsed into one integrated and unified end? Here again, the answer is Yes. Over the ages, many philosophers and ethicists such as Aristotle, Zeno, the Stoics, Kant and Adam Smith have argued in favour of a unifying narrative. For the Stoics, the unifying narrative is an effective agency and therefore justified itself as the telic end. For Kant, moral low is the telic end, whilst Aristotle argued in favour of a life of virtue and Adam Smith asserted that the greatest possible quantity of happiness is the telic end of virtue.

Now let's return to the original question: What is the telic end or terminus of virtues?

Looking at the conduct of humans during their lifetime, the heterogenous values, desires and passions of humans are measurable by the same telic end and can be collapsed into a simple narrative. We argue that the simple narrative or the innate desire of humans is to *improve their conditions of wellbeing*, to which we have given the narrative 'prosperity'. Just like a natural ecosystem, the right pH balance, airflow, nutrients, etc. work in a

symmetrical unity that allow species to prosper, flourish and thrive. Playfully put, the desire or telic end of a lettuce is not to be sliced up to become part of a Greek salad. The telic end is to prosper, thrive and flourish in order to become tasty, beautiful on the eye, crisp, etc. It is by these 'attributes' that we choose to enjoy lettuce in our Greek salad. Without these qualities and features, the end purpose and use will be diverted. Likewise, humans telic end is to improve their conditions of wellbeing. This is the one thing within the overall scheme of things that is well within humans slow reasoning and moral responsibility. Considering the greater rationality of God as the First Cause there may indeed be a greater overarching purpose that is outside our full comprehension for which we are not held responsible for. The purpose and maintenance of this universe remain at all times the responsibility of God as the First Cause. God in our view is determined by his unalterable perfections to maintain the universe and all the movements of nature to achieve at all times the greatest possible prosperity for all. It is within this universal benevolence that we as humans partake in. This is the one thing for the sake of which everything else is done. The approach we therefore take is that the telic orientation of humans are future directed and narrated towards the overall prosperity. That may also be interpreted by the narratives such as 'growth', 'flourishing' and 'thriving'.

We therefore take a more holistic frame of reference as focussing on the components of a prosperous life masks important characteristics of an ethical life. We believe that virtues' central and organising concern is about what we ought to do and ought to be, to live well, and to prosper, flourish and thrive. There is however a causal relationship with human effective agency, happiness and a life of virtue in a sense of enjoying a thriving and flourishing life. Happiness as Adam Smith asserts is only a part of the narrative. Likewise, a life of virtue is a necessary condition of the real life with a telic end. The same applies to the Stoic idea of ideal agency as it is a necessary condition of a prosperous life but not the end itself. This can also be said about Kant's assertion

that the end is a moral law. Here again, moral law is a necessary condition. The sole aim of human happiness, human goodness, the moral law and effective agency is human prosperity. Prosperity is the sole principal constituent, the one which gives life to other parts of an integrated and ethical life such as happiness, a healthy life characterised by vitality, ease of comfort and the preservation of human dignity – the good life and tranquillity of both body and mind. We therefore assert that well within human reason and moral responsibility within the overall scheme of things, the highest ethical goal is to better our conditions of wellbeing and to prosper. This makes prosperity or the improvement of the conditions of wellbeing the sole moral goodness. This defines right action. What leads to human prosperity is having essential value and whatever obstructs ought to be resented. Prosperity is therefore the referential point for navigation in the most exalted sense imaginable, and that is inspiring. Considering life hermeneutically as a whole story with a narrative unity, human prosperity ought to be pursued, where it comes from the intrinsic finality and the telic orientation of humans. *The highest ethical goal is human prosperity that defines the terminus of our efforts as guided by the principles of virtue.* We therefore make prosperity the guiding and fundamental concern that all people are well abled to pursue as a categorical commitment. However, when mastering virtues, we will coincidentally reach prosperity in the most exalted sense. Those who only approximate virtue seem to orbit true prosperity like comets swinging in the great ellipses, in which near virtues rarely and briefly enter the orbit of prosperity.

Without virtue we only orbit prosperity and may be confused or deceived by wealth and greatness as only a proximate end. As such those people pursue only pecuniary wealth and mortal greatness that are mere imitations of true prosperity and human wellbeing. The focus ought to be rather to be *loved* and *believed,* rather than be *wealthy* and *great.* More in contemporary language, the true virtuous person focusses on the characteristics required to become a good 'brand' that is built on trust, steadiness, goodness, etc., as the true basis of prosperity. Because these

qualities lead to prosperity including pecuniary wealth. Prosperity is therefore in this context the polestar of our ethical conduct. Though virtue is the referent or point for navigation of our conduct, the ultimate aim is human prosperity. For this reason, the merchant will work hard to establish his or her 'brand' not merely to be good or benevolent, but to become prosperous and to better his or her conditions of wellbeing and of those in his or her immediate circle of influence. Virtues, therefore, though they perfect or complete what is distinguishable for human wellbeing, what is so important is that by living well and by prospering, thriving and flourishing, our life is worthy of imitation and admiration, as vicegerents and examples of God's unalterable perfections. Human prosperity is therefore a divinely warranted end of human existence.

The question then is, what does prosperity or human wellbeing consist of? Though we have argued that prosperity is the terminus of virtue, it may be argued that it is not very useful to try to describe the general concept of a prosperous, thriving and flourishing life. However, we maintain and follow a sufficiency thesis that a virtuous life is characterised by dignity, *comfort, calm efficiency, tranquillity, joy, health* and vitality. This in our view, unproblematically describes the constituent parts of a prosperous life. This means that although a single narrative is defined, it consists of various heterogenous but commensurable, interlocking values, desires and intermittently secondary ends, over the whole conduct of human life, rather than a simple aspect of wellbeing. We therefore allow for the traditional conception of living well and being happy and the fulfilment of our legitimate, fair, reasonable and rationale desire and passions.

From our perspective and logical deduction, human prosperity is way more than being wealthy in a pecuniary sense. Human prosperity consists of four parts or intermittent ends considered to hermeneutically culminate into one narrated end. However, our view of prosperity is not very complex. Though it transcends the utilitarian and the materialistic version which underpins economic textbooks. This is an argument for another day.

The four constituent parts of the overarching narrative of *prosperity* are:

1. *Human comfort and dignity* or as classical ethicist and father of the modern commercial society, Adam Smith, termed as 'ease of body'. This means that to be well fed, clothed and housed are the most fundamental aspect of being prosperous. Here again the standard is the dignity, age, circumstances and responsibilities of the person observed.

2. *Health and vitality.* Health is the new 'wealth'. This includes physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Do we have to remind ourselves of the devastating impact of the widespread occurrence of the infectious disease of COVID-19 and how it impacted on human prosperity and wellbeing.

3. *Tranquillity of mind or having a clear conscience with no fear for the future.* Ease of body and ease of mind are like a pair. Bodily ease is unlikely to occur either when the provision of necessities is requiring strenuous effort that is difficult and tiring, or where vanity applies and the individual works frantically for non-essentials because the person is deceived by the future satisfaction and thereby committing a serious forecasting error of his or her own happiness. Tranquillity is indeed a very complex psychological and spiritual notion. However, tranquillity is the foundation of all real enjoyment and happiness, and therefore is distinguishable as a fundamental aspect of prosperity. There is however a difference between mere tranquillity and being good for others (Smith 2016:129). Adam Smith so aptly argued that not much can be added to the happiness of the person who is in ease of body and who has the means to protect his or her dignity and be able to realise his or her full potential and having a clear conscience and does not have debt. Having said that, when reading further in Smith's seminal works '*The Theory of Moral Sentiments,*' we as humans are not made only to change the external circumstances of oneself. The tranquillity consists of much more. It also resides in goodness to others. It is not enough to have a clear conscience that I have done no harm

to others. The tranquillity also resides in knowing that a person has done positive good for others (Smith 2016:129).

4. *The fourth aspect is human happiness and the enjoyment that is founded on personal liberty,* human dignity or ease of body and tranquillity of mind.

These four interlocking aspects of *prosperity* work through the mastering of virtues to achieve calm efficiency with which we approach all our endeavours in this life. When we are prosperous, our lives are worthy of imitation and admiration. But human excellence and the resultant prosperity and wellbeing that follow is not from the person's self but is as it were, something divinely inspired. For this reason, the honour is principally due not to the person but to God who predestined human's prosperity and provided humans with the creational gifts, called virtues, to pursue prosperity in a wholistic, harmonious and integrated way. It is therefore our inference, based on the intrinsic finality of the universe and the telic orientation of humans towards virtues and to abstain from vice, that virtues are thus necessary and sufficient for prosperity. In other words, to live a prosperous life in a sense of a good, happy and flourishing life. Virtues supply ethical dispositions, and it could be argued that if mastered, it would lead to prosperity. Prosperity is therefore not alongside virtuous activity but within. Virtues perfect our efforts towards prosperity and in this way, virtues integrate and realise our human end. Therefore, we claim that impregnable prosperity is always within the power of humans. We agree that a virtuous life does not need any additions to make it exceptionally prosperous. To be living a prosperous life and improving one's wellbeing, one must therefore give a prominent place to the exercise of virtues because virtues provide a narrative that is stable and enduring, which are the preconditions for prosperity. No form of prosperity can therefore be good unless it includes or is founded on virtue or what is morally and ethically right.

It is further our averment that this process is rather a qualitative than a quantitative one, and the process involves rather a state of

mind than a quantitative end that may be wrongly, in our view, be construed as being wealthy, which deserves admiration and greatness. That is in a sense a quantitative or measurable achievement in material wellbeing, that is wrongly admired and valued as the basis of greatness and to be bestowed with praise and admiration. Do not get us wrong. Income or wealth is important for the ease of body and to some extent the ease of mind in a sense that wealth offers some security. But the depth of virtue provides us with the steadiness and reliability that makes the virtuous person possessing calm efficiency that are the prerequisite for a much more integrated and wholistic approach to life and the attainment of lasting prosperity that exceeds mere bodily ease and gratification. The prosperous person is therefore cared for in body and mind. For instance, a virtuous person is of outstanding intelligence and possesses real wisdom and is not sluggish of mind and exertion. The virtuous person has an eager enthusiasm in the quest of life and the true meaning of life. With a far greater desire to comprehend with greater clarity the knowledge of the universe, he or she works towards disentanglement of the secrets of nature. Secondly, he or she distinguishes the things that should be sought out or avoided in forming rules of life. Thirdly, in judging what is the consequences to every premise, what is incomparable with it and in this way, he or she refines his or her conduct and judgement. There can hardly be a better course to choose as the prudential person remains mindful of the consequential effects of his or her conduct. The just person would not let him or her to divert anything that belongs to others nor would the person deliberately harm the dignity and estate of others. Likewise, the thrifty person uses resources mindfully with great discernment and are not wasteful. The industrious person is diligent and works hard to find solutions to problems and meeting expectations and fulfilling his or her duties and obligations. And to this can be added the fruits which spring forth from being cordial and friendly in which others can find comfort and inspiration by a shared and mutually inclusive approach, almost breathing the same breath. What we are trying

to illustrate is that the search for a prosperous life does represent more than a 'moral code' or system of values that we so often find displayed in corporate head-offices and in corporate statement of values. The search for prosperity whether in an individual or corporate or societal context demands logical motives, practical virtuous actions and above all, qualities and features that resemble virtuosity. Indeed, way more than mere value statements or social responsibility campaigns, however useful it may be.

What further ought to be well understood is that true prosperity is achievable by all, irrespective of status or level in society. No one ought to be inferior to those who seems to enjoy great wealth and greatness. The 'poor' can be equally prosperous like the 'king', 'landlords' and 'capital masters'. Prosperity in its true manifestation as we have attempted to elucidate is equally distributed. Here we agree with Adam Smith that in the commercial society, founded on the moral sentiments and liberties, the distribution of things that actually brings prosperity and wellbeing to people are far more equitable than the distribution of what Smith described as 'trinkets of frivolous utility' which is essentially existential resources, services and products (Ashraf, Camerer & Loewenstein 2005:139). That what gives rise to existential wealth are indeed distributed unequally. But that which gives rise to true prosperity, that also incorporates existential desires, are far more equitable by the grace of nature. The things that really count towards human prosperity are more equitably distributed than the things that do not. This can explain why cross-sectional differences in income really do not make such a big difference with respect to happiness (Ashraf et al. 2005:140). This may also explain why there is a very weak causality between gross domestic product and human happiness which is most evident in the happiness indices of many nations around the world.

This brings us to the penultimate observation we wish to share. In our view, prosperity as the end is justified on two grounds.

Firstly, there is an abstract contemplation of the perfections of God and the intrinsic finality and mark of virtue, which we admit may be considered by many as an *a priori* explanation. However, no other feasible and ethical end seems worthy of that supreme wisdom, love, power, divine benignity and universal benevolence which can be ascribed to God as the Universal Creator. This opinion has been arrived at and has been led to by the factual consideration of the infinite perfections that resonates in the intrinsic finality and telic orientation of humans. Secondly, there is also an empirical explanation that is most obvious, if we examine nature and the natural order that is harmonious, thriving and flourishing. Even as some may pinpoint to so-called 'flaws', upon closer inspection they are consistent with a more splendour harmony that is evolving from finality and in which even the imperfections serve to fulfil the various ends. The discerning mind will see the beauty and blessedness of all of nature, and will be filled with awe, wonder, admiration and a deep sense of gratitude. From our perspective, nature is filled to the brim with evidential facts that are indicative of the benevolent nature of the universe to allow all of creation to prosper, thrive and flourish.

We can evidently see in all of creation, the infinite perfections of the Creator and Exemplar of virtues that guide humans within in our limited reason and moral responsibility to enjoy the greatest prosperity and wellbeing as an intrinsic and telic part of the universal benevolence. There is therefore, in our humbled view, an *a priori* explanation and an empirical explanation for the telic end of virtue. When we propose prosperity as the final end, we think of it as something that everyone should pursue instead of something that everyone already pursues. But in our attempt to claim that human prosperity is the ultimate terminus or telic end of virtue, we suggest that virtues should be an intrinsic part of or instrumental to human prosperity or at least human prosperity ought to be consistent with virtue and the associated principles.

The focus therefore ought to be on creating a temper of mind and tenor of conduct that are founded on virtues. Virtues that form the essential constitution of a temper of mind and tenor of

conduct that not only pursue pecuniary wealth for ease of body and pleasure but also pursue justice, beneficence, temperance, empathy and many others in order to have tranquillity, joy, happiness and overall vitality – all in all to be prosperous. Considering the new conditions unfolding and the prerequisites for success, we will now focus on 7 virtues that we believe will guide us to be proficient agents in the times unfolding and in doing so be able to prosper and advance our wellbeing.

Considering the conditions unfolding, we will focus on the following seven virtues:

1. gratefulness
2. orderliness
3. politeness
4. self-differentiation
5. vitality
6. thriftiness
7. fidelity.

Let us now proceed.

■ Prosperity grid

What will now follow is a very small treatise on the '7 Prosperity Virtues' that we believe are most relevant to the changing conditions and worth mastering.

■ Virtue #1: Gratefulness

We start off this discussion on '7 Prosperity Virtues', with the virtue of gratefulness because life is so much more enjoyable and easy if you are feeling thankful and pleased. There is a more fundamental reason why we start off this discussion with the virtue of gratefulness, but more about that later. The word gratitude comes from the Latin word *gratus*, meaning *pleasing* and *thankful*. Gratefulness shows that you do not take things for granted. It is a clear sign that you do not expect this world to owe

you anything, as in entitlement, which is so prevalent in our society today. Gratefulness as a virtue is a good elixir that could correct the present-day idea of entitlement and the concept that the consumer-orientated society has instilled in the human psyche that 'You deserve it'. Gratefulness is a character strength or an abiding sensitivity that makes you more aware and conscious of all the blessings, support and encouragement that you have and are still receiving. In a very specific way gratefulness is an excitation caused by our remembrance or 'recollection' of certain aspects of human life. We use the word 'recollection' very deliberately because we will return to the importance of 'recollection' in the discussion on the virtue of fidelity. In so doing, we will conclude the circularity that we have observed, that is very characteristic of virtues as specific human capacities that are initially external to, and that pre-exist human reason.

But let's get back to the discussion on gratefulness as a virtue. Gratefulness reminds you of the bond that exists within all of nature, but in particular, the social bond that you share with other human beings. Gratefulness alerts you to your interconnectedness with other human beings because you are, like all others, not self-sufficient. Therefore, you are reliant on the sources of support and comfort that you have come to rely upon, and that remain available in your life. This potentiality is available in times of joy and in times of distress, and for which a sensible and reasonable person is very grateful for. From that grows an awareness that if you do not act in conjunction and in fellowship with others, then your own prosperity will be doubtful. With that comes a (1) growing resilience, (2) heightened commitment to live in solidarity with others, (3) a firmness of purpose and (4) desire to maintain your vitality and to be more orderly to keep things simple, so that you can be responsive to life with the required calm proficiency.

In this unique way, the virtue of gratefulness is a powerful elixir or antidote that would correct the prevailing conditions in modern society which have developed a strong ability to receive but sadly has an inability to give. In this sense, gratefulness is a counter act and brings into balance, the strong avoidance of

remembrance of who you are, how much you have benefitted and how little you have contributed to life. The virtue of gratefulness provides you with the capacity to fully appreciate and to find joy in a life of abundance that you live, but also to find solace in the fact that you are neither self-evident nor self-sufficient. That you cannot cope on your own nor are you alone. This realisation of our interdependence on nature is not experienced by a person that is grateful as an embarrassment nor is this perceived as a threat to a grateful person's independence and freedom. From your own perspective, the virtue of gratefulness will alert you to the wider network of virtues that exist and that are always in potential and in mastering other virtuous traits of character needed for human prosperity, and not be too reliant on the benevolence of others.

So, let's pause for a moment and highlight the more fundamental reason for starting off this discussion on '7 Prosperity Virtues' with the virtue of gratefulness. The more fundamental reason is because we consider the virtue of gratefulness as the root cause for the other virtues or at a minimum, this virtue is the golden key to unlock the others. Gratefulness is a very strong emotional power that incites you to help others to enjoy what you enjoy in abundance. If you are full of love and passion because life is beautiful, you wish others to enjoy the same, hence you unlock within yourself other virtuous traits of character to achieve just that – helping others to enjoy the beatitude of life. We wish to offer the following 10 reasons for consideration. Gratefulness as a virtue, *firstly,* would expand your awareness and consciousness of your interconnectedness with nature and would capacitate you to savour a social bond with other humans in particular. In this way, experiencing gratitude alerts you to the wider network of relationships. Being grateful of these shared experiences would capacitate you to act with greater *politeness* as you are mindful of your own dignity and those of others. *Secondly*, related to the above is that gratefulness would alert you to the joy others have caused you. You would identify gratefulness as a pleasant feeling that is clearly distant from a sense of obligation that

makes you subservient. Here the emphasis ought to be to 'return the favour' not as an obligation but rather as an act of love. Gratefulness is therefore not to be perceived as a quid pro quo, but rather as an act of love and not primary a love of self. As you have been bestowed with joy and the beauty of receiving, the virtue of gratefulness will incite you to express the joy and beauty by saying 'you have done this – I thank you!'. To say THANK YOU in a sincere and mindful way is *an expression of the love, joy and beauty within*. Though you know you are indebted to the person that bestows you with joy, the joy within you is far greater than the sense of indebtedness. The inner joy, the beauty you have experienced and the heightened sense of life are far more powerful emotions and find its expression in an act of love. It is this love within that would incite you (1) to *be firm in your resolve to succeed in your endeavours*, (2) to *take care of yourself*, (3) to *advance your vitality*, (4) *to bring order to your life,* and most importantly (5) *to live with fidelity* as you are mindful that you have to care for others and that they may have trust in you and that you would always act in good faith. Then these virtues are rather acts of love than obligations. *Thirdly,* gratefulness would capacitate you to enjoy a deeper appreciation towards experiencing the wonder, beauty and awe in life. Gratefulness would generate a sense of awe and reverence for life moving you to a much deeper mindfulness and appreciation of all the joy, happiness and tranquillity that surround your existence, which in turn would encourage you *to become more thrifty, frugal, innovative and creative*. Not purely because you 'wish to square up' but because the joy and beauty that surrounds you are 'rubbing off'. This is why the virtue of gratefulness is also called the 'Mozartian virtue'*.* If you are a fan of Mozart's music you will agree with us that his work celebrates life and inspires the lover of music to enjoy life and become a co-creator and bring to life the beatitude of life itself. His music is in a sense an incarnation of the true joy, wonder and awe of life, and the music carries with it this joy – the boundless gratefulness for what you value and appreciate in life. It may even be experienced by you that the joy,

wonder and awe whether purely internal or retrospective have an external cause. Simply because his music is not the cause of himself nor the end of the joy that it brings. The more we begin to love what we experience, all individual occurrences, the more we love God – the Author of Nature. Our gratefulness then expresses something divine and inspires us to be in a very humble way, a manifestation of this beatitude through our virtuosity. Gratefulness therefore *results in a taste for and interest in being virtuous*. *Fourthly,* gratefulness *makes you humble* because you feel and enjoy the grace of existence. What gratefulness does is to capacitate you with joyful humility. You know you are not your own cause, nor your own principle and knowing this creates even greater joy and liberates you from any false sense of self-evidence that might be the cause of your pride and ego and stand in the way of a truly joyous life experience. *Fifthly,* as you begin to experience a greater sense of gratefulness, the strength of this virtue will create within you a *state of grace*. In this state of grace, you are overwhelmed by your happy gratitude, your true humility and the superhuman power to *remain serene in times of calamity and suffering*. A much higher state of being that is quite extraordinary and transcends the ordinary human existence. You may have experienced it before. It is very difficult to feel fear, animosity, hate and sadness, whilst feeling grateful at the same time. This is key to *live a life of voluntary simplicity*. Gratefulness and life's satisfaction go hand in hand. Therefore, the *sixth* reason why gratefulness opens up the network to the other virtues is because a grateful person experiences fulfilment in the gifts that they have been bestowed with. They already possess internal tranquillity and do not have to look outside to be incited to be happy and joyful. Therefore, gratefulness always leads to contentment and voluntary simplicity that are key for sustainable prosperity.

The seventh reason would be that gratefulness *urges you to give*. Being grateful includes a desire to reciprocate in some way and respond with the required sensitivity and propriety. Therefore, gratefulness instils the virtue of generosity as the virtue of giving.

As we can only give that which we 'own', but not being possessed by; gratefulness is inseparable from freedom, as well as a far *greater appreciation and sensitivity of self-possession*. This then instil a firm commitment to act from one's freedom and a firm resolve to make good use of what has been bestowed upon you, which leads you to become a true servant leader, which comprises reason number eight. In the ninth instance, *it can also be observed* that gratefulness shows to improve solidarity with others because the effect of upstream reciprocity means that others wish to do the same and bring greater connectedness between people. *Finally,* gratefulness *improves mental and physical wellbeing* and with that comes a higher focus on the virtue and value of vitality. Grateful people are less prone to stress and much more inclined to value self-care and then more specifically to exercise. In the Stanley (2001:147) study, it has been established that 64% of millionaires use, as part of their actions and thought processes, gratitude as a means to eliminate fear and worries.

Given the aforesaid, we are deeply aware that the virtue of gratefulness is the root cause for the other virtues and that gratefulness as a human capacity is the foundation of ethical and moral conduct. We therefore are of the view that gratefulness would alert you to the wider network of virtues and would incite you to become most virtuous. But why do you struggle to be deeply grateful? Gratefulness is the most cardinal as well as most pleasurable virtue, though not the easiest to master. Therefore, if you struggle to live with and to show gratefulness, do not despair nor be too hard on you. There are possibly three reasons why you struggle and that can indeed be corrected through very simple and practical steps. In the first instance, many of us feel that being grateful place us in a position of indebtedness. This might be because of pride but also because we cannot give. We as a society have grown accustomed to receiving and giving is not easy when you enjoy receiving and quickly forget that others might have had something to do with that. Coupled with that, selfish and frivolous consumer mentality encourages us to believe that 'you're entitled to' something, with the result that we consider

things as ours alone and keep them without sharing nor without appreciating that others might have had a hand in it. In this instance, we struggle with being grateful not because we have an incapacity to receive, but rather, we have an incapacity to give back. This then is precisely why the virtue of gratefulness is such a powerful elixir. Secondly, in the modern society, there exists a concept which is sadly despicable and a calamity. What is at stake here is the way you see and experience the concept of life and nature. In our discussion on why gratefulness is the root cause of other virtues, we refer to the state of grace that the grateful person experiences. The grateful person experiences the grace of existence, the essence of being, the principle and cause behind all existence, and the joy, love and happiness that are most evident in life if viewed with the correct mindfulness. But the ungrateful person does not consider the origin of all existence. Nature is simply taken as 'that which is' and cannot be otherwise. This is a calamity. Because if viewed this way, something beautiful and very human dies because you live by the fact that you are self-evident and the cause of your freedom. Modern society and we suggest this is still very much the outcome of the Enlightenment doctrine, which views the world as purely natural, the way it is, and not a work of God as the Original Cause. Hence, they do not experience the world and then more particularly nature, as an abiding creational gift. Nature is by no means something that is devoid of awe, wonder and intelligence. But when you become more grateful, the false sense of self-evidence begins to dissipate and you would begin to see the hand of God – the Author of nature. As an act of love, your gratitude will incite you to thank Him for life. Thirdly, the problem of ungratefulness is much more evident and in your face. The structure by which we live as a modern society leaves less and less room for gratefulness. We have created what can be called a functional–mechanical structure of life. *You order, they deliver, and you pay, that's it*. There is nothing to be grateful for. Mechanical functioning is forcing gratefulness out of the equation. Furthermore, the decorum in the modern society is that we can be grateful only to

a person in an 'I and Thou' relationship. We cannot be grateful for a new law being passed by the legislator. We may do so out of politeness. Likewise, we cannot thank a Board that protects the environment nor the company that is providing the G5 network connection. Very much related to that is the present-day view that you can only be grateful in the realm of freedom. Following this line of thought, you do not have to be grateful that the sun rises in the morning. You do not have to be thankful for that, nor for the machine that works perfectly. Finally, the decorum in society is that you do not have to be thankful when you have a due and rightful claim. If you pay your utility bill, then you have the due right to claim the utility. The fact that you have had a great party with great music that has been only possible because the utility company made the electricity available, and that has brought you much joy, merriment and happiness, are not entering the equation. You have made an agreement and fulfilment of the agreement is no grounds for being thankful and is therefore not pleasing. Whichever way the enjoyment of a person with an entitlement, attitude is empty of gratitude and full of selfishness and ego. They live in vain and will never find the true humility that makes life lighter, joyful and meaningful.

The question then is how to master the virtue of gratefulness. Here are 12 practical steps you could consider enjoying life with greater gratefulness and exercise your capability to be grateful:

- *Be intentional*. Choose to be grateful. At least it does not cost much. Establish very intentionally, a ritual to be on the lookout for occurrences, even small ones, that you find pleasing and thankful for. In other words, be more observant, aware and conscious that life is full to the brim, with what could cause you joy, awe and wonder.
- *Develop an abundance mentality.* Do not have a scarcity mentality where you see all the opportunities as finite. Yes, it might be agreed that life is finite. But within human's small comprehension and relative simple needs that are required to enjoy life, life is indeed infinite. Life is full of opportunities, lots

of options to choose from and resourceful with an expanded potentiality. However, you have to remember, it is not what you own that brings you joy, it is what you are grateful for, that is what brings you absolute blissfulness. If you find it difficult to recollect the many times that you have been graced with endowments that you have found to be pleasing, keep a journal. Research has shown that when you write down what you have enjoyed and found pleasing, you can enjoy many other wellness benefits like reinforced positive thoughts which are quite enlightening as the brain tends to focus on what is going wrong or what can cause suffering and pain (Holmes 2015:3).

- *Focus on what you have.* We are hesitant to simply say 'count your blessings'. Because here the focus is on enjoying what you have. Therefore, we say do not down talk what you have or overburden you with that which you do not have. You have, if you look for it, an abundance of things in your life already. The list is infinite – (1) a good job, (2) two cars parked in the driveway, (3) enjoying a nice shower after gym, (4) a very specific talent, (5) a bed to sleep in and (6) a supportive and loving spouse. Getting the point!
- *Do not expect that life is going to give you everything you deserve.* The sooner you realise that life does not owe you anything nor that you will get what you want, the better. This will open up a more realistic and humbled outlook to life. Not as in subservient and that you better take what you get and shut up. Not at all! Here we mean to say that you should not have preconditions to your happiness. You need this and that to be happy. Or if 'this happens, only then....'. What we can testify to is that life will give you what you need and obviously only in response to what you do. It is purely hypocritical to do one thing and expect another thing. Or to do nothing and expect everything. Nor is it fundamentally or rather universally the case that if you 'put your mind to it, then you will get it'. This works in many cases but that should not be the approach. What ought to be the approach is that you apply your mind to

do what is right and befitting knowing well that a beneficial outcome will be realised. It might not be what you have expected but if it is a matter of more than less, life will endow you with more.

- *Embrace humility.* We have touched on it already. Humility is a cardinal ingredient in gratitude. A humbled mind finds pleasure in the gifts already received and possess and demands not more from others and life. Do not be picky and know the value of little things. Nothing is too small. Everything is useful and helpful to bring you joy and pleasure. Be humble and live with the reality that you cannot have the rainbow without the rain. Neither can you enjoy honey without the bees, nor the rose without the thorns. Here humbleness implies that you find joy and pleasure in the beauty of life that what makes you whole and pleasing, and does not consider the downside as beyond you.

- *Stop focussing on what you do not have.* The beauty of gratitude will pass you by, if you remain more focussed on what you do not have. There is an ancient Eastern proverb that says: 'use what you have and do not be held back by that which you don't have'. If you cannot run, then walk, but stay active and be grateful. If you cannot write a beautiful poem, then phone someone and have a pleasant chat. When you approach life that way, it is very difficult, first of all to give up, and secondly not to be grateful that you can still do what is pleasing to you. To develop such an attitude, you have to live by the motto: 'Think Straight – Live Great'. You have to separate emotional perceptions from the facts and the rational from the victim-like emotions. It also requires flexibility of thought. Flexibility is key to growth and progress. Do not cling to stubborn ideas or conventional thinking. If things do not work out, then stop blaming what you do not have. Do with what you have or change ways. If you are overcome by bitterness and grudges for what you do not have, your mental vitality and eventually your physical and spiritual vitality will suffer. After all, it is very difficult to be grateful, if you harbour or have

steep negative feelings. Forgive your spouse for not always being in tune with your needs. Forgive your children for the wrong choices they have made. And give up the grudges you carry for a slight injustice from a friend or colleague. By keeping it, you are the one getting burned and you are the one missing out on lots that life offers, that is pleasing and enjoyable.

- *Open your eyes to those with less.* Today there is hardly a place on earth where you will not find someone who is truly in need. The reality is that almost half of the world's population have to make do with less than $1.50 a day. Billions have inadequate access to basic goods of comfort, food, clothing and shelter. Let those facts sink in even if it is just for a moment and then resolve what you can do to express your gratitude for what you have.

- *Surround yourself with people that live a grateful life.* People that live a grateful life have an abundant mindset. This is so easy to observe. You can see those that always have a positive outlook because they have come to trust the blessedness or beatitude of life. You also would see those that always see the glass half-full instead of half-empty. Their attitude rubs off. Surround yourself with people like that. Related to this is that you have to watch your language. Grateful people use a very specific language style, not because for frivolous reasons but because they live by the credence that life is awesome. We do not want to encourage you to use language that does not express your inner feelings. But what we do advise is that you become mindful of the language that grateful people use. They use words such as (1) gifts, (2) givers, (3) blessings, (4) blessed, (5) fortune and (6) abundance. Again, here they do so with the necessary humility. They do not imply that they are blessed and those that suffer is being punished or blessings have been withdrawn. The language they use is more an expression of their love within rather than an expression of differentiation.

- *Do not keep it for yourself.* Gratitude is not a selfish act. To the contrary, as we have already alluded to, gratefulness is an act

of intense love. So do not keep your gratitude to yourself. You can increase your awareness and consciousness of the great act of love by expressing gratitude to the people that have brought you joy and that you find pleasing. Not only would you feel great, the person that you have showered with words or gifts of gratitude will feel that their day is lighter even brighter but more important that their lives have some meaning and purpose. It can surely do wonders. It could make the person even more virtuous, whole and if needed, be healed. Do we have to reiterate that the act of gratefulness does not need to cost a small fortune. It can be a (1) smile, (2) a simple word like Thank you Sir/Madam, (3) a call to say YOU MADE MY DAY – HOW CAN I HELP YOU, (4) a letter of gratitude, (5) spending time with loved ones and (6) become a volunteer and be a friend for someone in the old age home, mental institution or places for people with special needs. The list is endless!

- *Do not be defined by your regrets but rather by your dreams.* What more can we say!
- *Do not be overcome by trivial things.* This is perhaps the greatest stumbling block in the way of living a grateful life. So often we allow our tranquillity to be disturbed by what is truly trivial or accidents that are common and unavoidable. You may have experienced it yourself perhaps. What silliness, if you allow a pleasant dinner to be spoiled by a waiter that accidently drop a glass of wine at the table next to you. Or you take your loved ones in your brand-new car for a ride and a small rattle becomes the topic of discussion. How silly. What a waste of an opportunity to enjoy what is pleasing and special.
- *Finding gratefulness in your challenges.* We cannot conclude this discussion without touching on this aspect of life. Gratitude is not only about something that is positive. Here you can either practice gratefulness by observing the difficult situations others encounter. But a much deeper emotion is when you find the beauty in suffering and pain. When, what has been perceived as a loss, is in fact a gain. Where a failure has made you more resilient and resolute to conquer whatever it may be.

The truth is that no one is free from suffering. But the way to look at it is that life is indiscriminate. This means that life or God is not selective. Rain falls on the just and the unjust. Sickness can come to all. COVID-19 has not only caused suffering to the poor or the rich. But everyone has been exposed and those that have contracted the virus were not 'handpicked'. The failures of life have its own beauty and as such can be pleasing in the sense that if you work at it mindfully and with the required prudence, you will gain from it. The liquidation of your company can make you a better businessman. So, do not stop short when you experience failure. Embrace it and find the sense of it all and express your gratitude loud and clear. Even in recollecting failures, suffering and pain can be valuable in strengthening the act of gratefulness.

Just as the virtue of gratefulness can be expressed in many ways, so it can also be learned and mastered like any other human capacity. Work at it until you achieve excellence. When you find the act of gratitude most pleasing in itself, then you know you are now on your path to prosperity.

■ Virtue #2: Orderliness

Let's start off this discussion by explaining first of all why we have decided to include the *virtue of orderliness* in the list of '7 Prosperity Virtues'. The simple answer is that, in a changing world, those that *seize the moment* first and that are *awake and ready to respond,* will have a better chance to capture the opportunities and ensure their long-term prosperity. We therefore in the chapter on habits have dealt with the need and importance to become accustomed to 'seizing the moment' and to 'be awake and ready to act'. The real challenge in a changing world is to be awake and responsive, rather than to be passive and reactive. This requires from you, as we already alluded to, to have a great sense of gratefulness that instils a sense of awe, wonder and desire to make a noble and worthwhile

contribution as the opportunities permit. Second to the *virtue of gratefulness*, in our observation, is to have the capacity to live orderly. We will explain just now the meaning of the word. If you are desirous to be responsive to new opportunities that evolve and manifest under certain conditions and with a very high velocity, you have to be mindful of order and cleanliness in your life and surroundings. Orderliness in our view, or at least in the context that we employ the term, can best be described as the capacity to appreciate and apply method and system. What this means is that an orderly person focusses continuously on developing the capacity to be regular, uniform, precise and balanced. Much can be said about these four capacities but regrettably, we have to move on. Orderliness is therefore about order in your surroundings and your conduct. Although the *virtue of orderliness* is rarely discussed in the contemporary society, orderliness is in fact central to improving your proficiency through a structural engagement with life and as such is a precursor to your prosperity. The virtue of orderliness is then also a good elixir of cluttering and a scattered or disordered lifestyle that are often associated with (1) inefficiency, (2) procrastination, (3) indecision, and (4) wasting of time. These are universal factors that would impede your changes to be prosperous. See it in this way. To master the *virtue of orderliness* gives you the ability to become most excellent in applying method and structure to your life and will increase productivity, readiness, steadiness and above all would allow you more time and greater resourcefulness to respond to new opportunities with far greater originality. This would set you apart, as in differentiating what you offer, from others. The *virtue of orderliness* therefore would allow you to 'hack life' at the right time, with the right strength of regularity, precision and balance. All in all, the *virtue of orderliness* brings stability and steadiness to your life so that you can seize the moment and be awake and ready to act. Having answered the first question, we can now define the term orderliness more correctly. Orderliness as a virtue can be defined as an acquired capacity of being well arranged and organised through the application of a

system of methods including principles and rules and arrangement of parts or elements of life to be structured in terms of a pattern or organisation. In short, due method and structure. The life of a person that possesses this capacity is more often than not, disposed and arranged in a neat and tidy manner with relative simplicity, in order for the person to be most responsive to, and having the time and resourcefulness to act in a regular sequence that can best be narrated as (1) organised, (2) well-structured, (3) timeous, (4) proficient and (5) appropriate to the circumstances. The *virtue of orderliness* is therefore an effective elixir for (1) disorderliness, (2) untidiness, (3) procrastination, (4) disarrangement and (5) overall disarray and carelessness. Orderliness as a virtue ought to be in our view, one of the arrows in your quiver. The *virtue* of *orderliness* is then a highly regarded capacity amongst successful people. In the Stanley study (2001:95), 36% of the respondents that are successful entrepreneurs and are also millionaires have rated the *virtue of orderliness* as very important for success in comparison to being well disciplined (54%) and working harder than most people (49%). The last two qualities are made possible by the principal *virtue of orderliness*. Without being methodological and structured, discipline and hard work will be that much harder to achieve. We will revert to this aspect towards the end of this discussion.

Having defined the *virtue of orderliness* and laid out the reasons for being included in the '7 Prosperity Virtues', we will now briefly touch on the practical considerations as to why this principal virtue ought to be mastered. For the sake of brevity, we will just lay out a few points for consideration. Firstly, orderliness allows you to live with structure and free from clutter. Clutter is a major hindrance in working with the required calm proficiency. Consider the following facts. The average executive in the USA spends six weeks per year searching through messy desks and disorganised files for misplaced information. Twenty-three per cent of adults say they are late paying their bills because they lost them (Green 2016). With cluttering comes procrastination

and the lack of structure and systematic methodology. This ought to be fixed so as to allow you to focus on your goals and the bigger picture so to say. You will be more organised and more proficient if you practice orderliness by firstly giving things a proper place and time, by drawing up a plan before beginning a job, solving problems systematically and creating a harmonious space that gives you peace of mind. In these small steps are vested the power of clarity and the power that fortifies your habits to withstand the inevitable chaos and uncertainty that can visit your life at times of change. These practical steps also have the power to help you lessen the time you spend deciding what to do next. The real reason we would say why orderliness is a powerful 'tool' in your 'toolbox' is because by practicing orderliness in what may appear to be minor issues allows you to concentrate on the bigger picture or the more important issues at hand. Orderliness therefore begins by doing the little things right so that you are not distracted and derailed. By putting first things first, and taking care of all the small things that cause distraction would help you to remove worries in matters that are small. This would allow you to attend to those things that truly matter. Secondly, orderliness would help you to relax and focus. There are principally two reasons for this. By doing things in a methodological and structured way, brings a sense of fulfilment. It helps to bring peace of mind but also peace to your immediate working environment in which you operate most of your hours awake. As orderliness helps to create a neat and ordered environment and a way of living, you would gain a greater sense of harmony between your inner self and your exterior surroundings. Thirdly, orderliness makes you very resourceful. Whereas cluttering drains your energy and prevents your creativity, your resourcefulness is advanced because of the heightened focus on finishing on time and to get the job done right the first time. When you are structured and systematic in your approach, you will get things done more efficiently without wasting time and effort. Without order, your self-discipline suffers and confusion and procrastination cause indecision and hesitation that impact negatively on your ability to work with calm proficiency.

Having said this, orderliness should not be a yoke and hinder your authentic and unique way of doing things nor should it drain your passion. Like so many things in life, excess of orderliness can make life and work hard, narrow and cumbersome. But then we have to be cautious not to fall for the idea that you live by the moment and act impulsively. When you fall prey to this misnomer then you might be tempted to leave what you have begun with because you are either bored or have suddenly a new idea in your head. A new impulse that you may pursue without having considered the implications could cause you more hardship and headaches and waste more time than if you have approached the new idea in the required structured and methodological way.

Considering the three broadly defined reasons, we hope that you would see and understand the fact that the principal *virtue of orderliness* is an indispensable element of life. In the latter part of this discussion, we will highlight a few practical steps that you may consider to help you to become more orderly and in so doing create room for increased prosperity. We will also touch on what you would gain in mastering this virtue. But for now, we wish to pause for a moment to briefly bring into play the influencing *virtue of cleanliness* that is very much an ally of the principal *virtue of orderliness* and then to pinpoint the interface between orderliness and cleanliness that is suggestive that there is much strength in applying the capacity of orderliness with that of cleanliness. Here we will dust off the 'Broken Window' concept that we believe has a place in our modern-day discourse on how it could be used to advance your prosperity.

Back to the *virtue of cleanliness!* Cleanliness is an important virtue in living a prosperous life. The beauty of this virtue is that it is not related to the wealth or status of a person, and its potentiality is like all other virtues, available to all. Cleanliness as a virtue means the state of being clean or the act of keeping things clean. Here the focus is not only on the physical cleanliness of the person or the environment. Yes, this is important! Many businesses know that to present themselves in person and in the

surroundings in an untidy manner is not an enriching experience to the customer and would undermine the confidence and trust in the business, its brand, services and personnel. The *virtue of cleanliness* is much more. Cleanliness as a virtue also includes mental, emotional and spiritual elements. In this sense, cleanliness implies a moral quality of being. From there the saying that 'cleanliness is next to godliness'.

It is that simple! You can be structured and methodological in your approach to life and be free of cluttering and procrastination, but if your surroundings are (1) untidy, (2) the purity and perfection of your language is corrupt and violated and (3) your motions are erratic and spiritually indifferent, then you will not enjoy the real benefits of being orderly. You see, *the virtue of cleanliness* is a good elixir that would help to correct a lifestyle that the *virtue of orderliness* also aims at. A lifestyle that is grimy, corrupt, scruffy and unclean, that narrates a character that is degenerating, careless and impolite. The *virtue of cleanliness* encapsulates all of our existence. From the general state of our cities, rivers and neighbourhoods to the rudeness and impoliteness that we now see from the leaders and public representatives, all this is indicative of one thing and this is that the modern society is not pro-cleanliness and is in need of a 'make-over'. To correct this, we must become real crusaders in the quest to get rid of dirt, squalor and rudeness by making us self-clean first. Cleanliness starts with our character and our immediate surroundings. Besides, a person who keeps him or herself clean physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually is indeed a good exemplar of ethical conduct and an inspiration for many. Cleanliness is therefore a major step to a healthy and prosperous life and contributes to other ideals such as (1) health, (2) beauty, (3) vitality, (4) foresight, (5) self-differentiation, (6) politeness and (7) friendliness.

There is another reason why we have decided to enlist the *virtue of cleanliness* in this discussion and why we personally rate this virtue next to orderliness. Research published in 'Psychological Science', a journal of the Association of Psychological Science

(Ward 2010:27) in 2008 proposed that people who displayed the *virtue of cleanliness* showed a reduction in the severity of their moral and ethical judgement. The study highlighted the observation that intuition rather than deliberated reasoning can inform your perception of what is ethically right and wrong. It is a known fact and the study suggests that people make snap judgements that are frequently based on first impressions. Therefore, cleanliness can be a game changer in our society that so easily jumps to conclusions and forms prejudices. The value of both physical and moral cleanliness in our view is beyond compare and ought to be on your radar if you wish to be prosperous.

This brings us to the interface between cleanliness and orderliness. We have elected to bring here into play the concept of the 'Broken Window' theory. We are personally exposed to underdeveloped economies whose recovery and progress are severely hampered by squalor, untidiness, corruption and impoliteness that are within the psyche of society and manifested in the surroundings. The prosperity of individuals and that of the larger society are so much more difficult and complex under these circumstances, hence the brief exposé on the 'Broken Window' *theory.* The 'broken window' is a metaphor for disorderliness and uncleanliness. The theory links these two factors with incivility or what we see as moral and physical disorder and untidiness and subsequent occurrences of serious crime and the consequential poverty. The real applicability of the theory was well demonstrated in New York City in the 1990s. In this time, the city experienced a dramatic decrease in crime, disorder and poverty levels that have been attributed to the introduction of the 'broken window' strategy. The initiative cracked down on very specific occurrences of disorderliness that have been very much associated with the lifestyle in New York at the time, that included:

• panhandling
• disorderly behaviour
• public drinking
• street prostitution

- unsolicited window washing
- other attempts to solicit cash from drivers in traffic
- turnstile jumpers at the metro and other misdemeanours.

As these misdemeanours were effectively contained, crimes of all kinds decreased dramatically and poverty levels decreased. Serious crimes decreased by almost 40% and the murder rate had been halved. Surely this can be achieved in all other cities around the world, with the focus on specifics that are applicable to the circumstances. This may even include general environmental tidiness, traffic offences, impoliteness and rudeness amongst public representatives in legislators, and the repair and maintenance of public utilities. The list is endless and can be much broader to cover specific disorderliness and untidiness in specific societies and neighbourhoods. Prior to the development and implementation of the 'Broken Window' strategy as an integral part of a policy to promote civility, law enforcement tended to focus on serious crimes. But as orderliness and uncleanliness were eliminated, the serious crimes were curtailed. The theory posits that prevailing disorder and uncleanliness create fear and a lack of dignity and trust in the minds of the citizens who were convinced that society is in disarray and that they are unsafe and that they can do nothing about it. The withdrawal from the community weakened social controls that previously kept criminals at bay.

The 'broken window' theory can be applied with equal success in promoting individual and societal prosperity. Orderliness and cleanliness are in our view precursors to sustainable prosperity as an ordered and clean exterior environment impact positively on the general mindset of a person that would unleash creativity, imagination, industriousness and firmness to make things better. Orderliness and cleanliness can therefore create room for prosperity.

We will now proceed to offer some practical tips that you could consider to live a more orderly life. This will be followed with a brief discussion on what you stand to gain by being more orderly.

It all starts by being a *good steward.* If you care for your possessions, everything will have its place and time. This can be further amplified by implementing habits to manage your clutter. If you possess too many things, your possessions begin to possess you. You begin to work to keep them up and well maintained whilst they are meant to bring you joy and greater liberties. So, slowing down the accumulation of clutter will not only bring better order in the sense that you can take better care but also it removes or at least reduces stress and the resources required to maintain unnecessary possessions. It is therefore imperative not to overspend on things and possession that cost you more to maintain. What could be of assistance in your assessment of what is needed, is to remain mindful that life is more rewarding when you focus on experiences rather than on existential things. Furthermore, remember good order saves time, but then it should not consume too much time. In your day-to-day tasks attend to the small tasks that could make a much larger impact, by freeing up time. Here, it could be very helpful to work from a single-to-do list. Finally, if your resolve is weak, keeping and restating certain affirmations could affirm your resolve, such as mantras such as (1) 'I live this day with order', (2) 'I do things step by step' and (3) 'I am creating beauty and harmony in my surroundings. But ultimately you ought to believe that an orderly life is a good life and that you can do it! It is that simple. Surely, students in Business School will have mastered more fundamental strategies to be more methodological and structured. You can read up on these subjects, but start small and work your way through to a life that is devoid of (1) cluttering, (2) scatteredness, (3) disorder, (4) procrastination and (5) not being bogged down with trivial and distractedness.

By taking these few practical steps your life will be more orderly and you will gain more than you think. Orderly and cleanliness in your surroundings can be the start to orderliness and cleanliness in the inside. There are indeed some patterns observable amongst those people who have mastered this principal virtue. Firstly, orderly people have a high level of self-awareness.

They think more carefully and methodologically and use specific aids and routines that work best to mitigate their personal weaknesses:

- They also make more use of technology. There are many applications available on the Internet that you could employ to order your life and being more methodological and structured in your personal and professional life.
- Orderly people are more goal orientated and have a firmness of purpose. With orderliness also comes greater self-confidence and resilience.
- They are also very optimistic because they can separate the trivial from the cardinal matters.
- With that comes a heightened consciousness of maintaining a pattern of behaviour geared at success.
- They also have a do-it-now attitude which makes them less of a procrastinator and more a person that takes decisions.
- What is also evident is that self-ordered people let go of perfection. Their focus is rather on what is realistically achievable given the order of things.
- Therefore, they do not find it embarrassing to ask for help and they know when they have done the best they could, having the benefit of working methodologically.

If need be they would ask. They do not prefer multitasking. Multitasking, they belief and have first-hand experience of, causes more distraction and spreads their attention too thinly. For them 'juggling' too many balls at the same time is cumbersome and lowers the quality of output. Ordinary people give one task their ultimate attention and shamelessly turn off email pop-ups and other distractions to protect and conserve their time and mental focus. Therefore, it is not surprising that they are very much self-directed and self-disciplined. They value this aspect and work hard to maintain a good pattern of disciplined behaviour. They hold themselves responsible for a higher standard of excellence and do not consider self-directedness and self-discipline as either selfish nor unpleasing, but certainly disconformable. A self-disciplined person also carries out their plans and decisions in

spite of inconveniences, hardships or obstacles. To avoid regrets and failure, a self-disciplined person plans for and evaluates alternative options and has a well-developed internal compass or conscience. They make course adjustments if need be. But let's be assured, they are not easily side-tracked. They can work in a French bakery without gaining excess weight. The reason being that an orderly and highly disciplined person practices self-denial and forgoes instant and immediate gratification and is more than capable of avoiding unhealthy and ill-considered excess in favour of some greater benefit and joy in future. You will therefore find that as you become more orderly, that you will constantly work to impose self-discipline as you have gained so much more from this steadiness and regularity in conduct and behaviour. To help you speeding up your self-discipline, you should focus initially on small things:

- do things within your immediate capacity
- stop seeking continued entertainment and ease of life and pleasurable things
- practice to be on time
- keeping your word and commitments
- finish what you start even though you have a newer and brighter idea
- accept and in fact, embrace criticism and correction.

An orderly person welcomes greater responsibility. This then is what you stand to gain if you are orderly and be most mindful of being clean and tidy as a person and in your surroundings. In this way, new doors to prosperity will open up and what you do will be most rewarding. Orderliness is in our view, a principal virtue that you can leverage in helping you to prosper and thrive in a changing world with all the ebbs and flows associated.

■ Virtue #3: Politeness

Perhaps you may be surprised that we have included the idea of *politeness* in our list of '7 Prosperity Virtues'. Because in many scholarly circles, politeness is not valued as a virtue but a

simulacrum, or at best a personality trait. Obviously, by the inclusion of the concept of *politeness,* we demonstrated that our view is different. In this exposé, we shall therefore speak of *the virtue of politeness* which is often neglected or viewed as superfluous in a materialistic world where human dignity often ranks lower than achievements, richness, status or power. Why do we consider politeness as a precursor to your continued prosperity? The essential answer is that your prosperity is highly dependent on your capacity to relate and converse with other people because of our interconnectedness. In fact, the object of all virtues is, amongst others, to achieve just that. Our virtuous actions aim to establish a *'feeling of fellowship'* through multiple interactions between relating parties. The process of establishing the 'feeling of fellowship' starts with establishing a *connection* in the first place. This then is the specific object of the *virtue of politeness*. As we will explain later on, the process of establishing a *connection* takes serious effort and therefore you should master a very specific capacity to achieve this *connection* as the first *entrée* point in a possible relationship to come. It is not an easy task but a very necessary one. People in the modern world who are very diverse live work and play together in narrow and confined spaces, within a (1) family home, (2) office, (3) factory, (4) courtroom, (5) school, (6) hospital, etc. or in crowded gatherings like during the traffic rush hour. Consequently, their spheres of action, moods and prejudices are always touching each other. As in most instances, this is associated with particular activities specific to a person's purpose, tasks, and broader goals. So, people are occupied, focussed and many a times stressed. Constant danger of friction and the sudden outburst of anger are therefore prevalent. To lessen the violence of antagonism, if put in the negative or in the positive, to create good impressions upon others, we have all an innate human need to be treated politely and most people have the desire to treat others politely so that orderly social relations can be established that allow people to continue to live, work and play, in reasonable harmony and with the required dignity. The primary objective of the *virtue*

of politeness, is then to protect human dignity, yours as well as others, by establishing and living in accordance with a first-order decorum. *The virtue of politeness* is therefore about respect and awareness of other people. Firstly, to mitigate social tension arising from daily interactivity, but more fundamentally, to great impressions that could pave the way for a more developed interconnectedness and conducive relationship. Politeness as a virtue is in our view, much more than simple manners. It is an acquired capacity to begin to create what we call a 'feeling of fellowship'. Politeness is therefore all about how you *connect* with others, as a possible starting point for building mutually conducive relationships. It is this 'feeling of fellowship' that follows and opens doors to your continued prosperity. We have also included politeness as a virtue because politeness is a good elixir for rudeness, disrespect and inconsiderate behaviour that could withhold you from being prosperous. Given the growing human interconnectedness and the diversity that is evolving in thoughts, prejudices, culture, beliefs and actions in a multicultural globalised world, the *virtue of politeness* is in our view definitely an arrow that you need to have in your quiver. Politeness, if you are sincere, would help you to embrace openness and diversity through correct social usage. These then are few reasons why we have included the *principal virtues of politeness* as one of the '7 Prosperity Virtues'*.* If properly mastered, the *virtue of politeness* can be leveraged by you in helping you to be prosperous.

In what now follows, we will touch on four important underlying and associated points to offer a broader context of the *virtue of politeness. Firstly,* we will explain why we are of the view that politeness is not a *simulacrum. Secondly,* the fact that politeness has disintegrated in modern society. *Thirdly,* that politeness is a good operating virtue. *Finally,* we will offer some tips on how to improve your capabilities to be polite and to be able to *connect* with others through *correct social usage.*

Is politeness a simulacrum of something that is actually a virtue like generosity or compassion? As you may have established

by now, we hold a view that politeness is a virtue. Scholars that view politeness as a simulacrum often refer to politeness as being simply pretentious behaviour or an act that is not sincere. The line of inference that they follow is that first semblances of virtue are explained and taught in terms of discipline or as the outcome of external constraint. Scholars argue that humans become human beings only through education and discipline. Accordingly, *facts precede what is right.* Some things are allowed and some things are forbidden. To cut a long story short, the argument goes that humans in a multitude of relations and co-dependency start with well-educated respect for usage and good manners. Because good manners are taught, the act of politeness is rather a pretentious act than an acquired taste for good behaviour and propriety or than what is right, wholesome and divine. To say 'please' or 'excuse me' or to ask, 'how can I help you?' or 'I thank you sir/madame' because it is taught normatively is not more than a pretentious way to show respectfulness, helpfulness, gratefulness and consideration of others. From this perspective, politeness is then only a reflection of what is truly virtuous like compassion, empathy and considerateness. Proponents of this line of reasoning see politeness as only a start from which more virtuosity can spring forth. Here they rely on the views of Kant that when you play this role of being polite, virtues are gradually established, whose appearance had only been affected by the act of politeness. Looking it in this way, by being polite in multiple occasions, you would move from aesthetics, which has only the appearance of beatitude and wholeness to become more ethical and virtuous. So, what is at stake here is that you must first acquire the appearance and manner of good, not because it is in itself sufficient but because it would help you attain the ability that politeness first only imitates. In other words, politeness only creates the conditions sufficient for the emergence of other cardinal human capacities that are needed to prosper. Essentially what this is showing out is *insincere politeness*. Like all other virtues, politeness can be insincere, artificial, unnatural and

pretentious. Like the virtue of compassion, the gift of the giver can be a deception of the true compassion or generosity according to the motive and reasoning. But an act of politeness can be done with the utmost sincerity that is free of being deceitful and free of oneself and rather be innocently and justly. Admittingly, a child becomes a mature adult by the decorum that is upheld in the society. The child's initial behaviour may be rather pretentious than an acquired taste for propriety. But this is a very narrow view of politeness as a human need and a human capacity to fulfil that need. We agree that the child could pretend to be respectful by saying 'Good morning Sir/Madame' because the child has been taught to do that. But that does not detract from the fact that politeness is fundamentally an acquired human capacity to establish connectedness through proper decorum. We hold therefore a much broader view of the proficiency and effect of politeness. Politeness is something very deep in human psyche. Humans crave politeness and therefore act politely also to others to the degree that the virtue has been acquired. We are sure you have experienced it. If you treat someone impolitely, in other words with disrespect and disloyalty that touches the persons dignity, you will quickly see or encounter a response. If you have travelled to countries that uphold a certain decorum and decent degree of politeness, such as Japan, then one of the first things you would tell people back at home is: 'how nice they are'. But if you experience the opposite in your world travels, you would also quickly relay and reflect how rude, disrespectful, inconsiderate, prideful and deceitful the people of that country are – no names will be mentioned. Impolite experiences resonate so deeply in the human psyche that you cannot otherwise conclude that the concept of politeness is actually a fundamental human need, hence the need to acquire the capacity to fulfil that need in order to *connect* with others more effectively.

Let's return to our previous statement that politeness is far more than simple mannerism. Politeness is a way of life and an acquired capacity that is more than saying 'Thank you' or 'Please'.

Politeness means: to be aware of and be respectful of the feelings of others:

- giving others the space for themselves
- protecting others from oppressive closeness
- recognise the good in others
- let them feel valued, not in a pretentious way but in a sincere way
- keeping silent about one's own qualities and focus on those of others
- acknowledge and celebrating others
- be considerate of the mood of others
- sympathise with the person's weariness
- smoothing over painful situations
- embracing the honour and the dignity of others and so on.

Politeness is in our view a constant attempt to make life easier, comfortable and more dignified at any point in time. Politeness is keeping unpleasantness at bay or even better, to bridge them. Politeness is about avoiding embarrassing situations to creep up, by removing the sting from painful, cumbersome and stressful circumstances and to lighten the burden and protecting human dignity. In many ways, politeness contrary to be a simulacrum of what is truly virtuous lightens the difficulty that morality can face up to and many a times have to be the vicegerent of morality. Moral difficulties are quite often avoided by the *virtues of politeness*. Whether you call it 'good manners' or not, politeness is an acquired taste for what is good, wholesome and aesthetically pleasing. From our perspective, politeness is so much more. It is a capacity that advances human excellence in the particular sphere of motives which moderate the human impulses of insolence that manifest in rudeness and disrespectfulness. Looking at the concept of politeness from this perspective, the *virtue of politeness* empowers you to look beyond yourself as the focus is on being respectful and considerate of others and do not begrudge others for that you lack yourself nor do you impose on others what you behold as valuable and to be the truth. Being polite, or should we rather say, having the capacity to be polite, would make you well

disposed to life and as such being polite you would be able to *connect* with others without mistrust, judgements, criticism and ill-considerate behaviour. You will *connect* with others by being respectful, valuing and protecting their dignity and giving them space to be themselves and smoothing out tension and embarrassing situations. Politeness is therefore the capacity that makes you constantly turn to and reaching out to others with respect and considerations. Not because you are more superior, but because you are very mindful of your own frailness; you need to be treated in a dignified way and because you dislike people who are rushing over your feelings in pursuit of whatever. Politeness as a virtue, in our view, looking from this perspective is a strength that instils in you a greater love for others (1) a state of peacefulness, (2) make you more serene and gentle, (3) full of patience and leniency and (4) overcoming your own weaknesses of rudeness, inconsideration and disrespectful conduct. In this unique way, the *virtue of politeness* resonates and resembles love more than even generosity and compassion can. Politeness should therefore not be considered as only a reflection of what is 'good' and what is 'love'. Politeness as a human capacity is not subservient to other virtues nor is politeness only a 'virtue light' when comparing with (1) generosity, (2) compassion, (3) orderliness, (4) fidelity, (5) frugalness and (6) firmness of purpose or voluntary simplicity. However, what we admit to is that the *virtue of politeness* opens up the door for the *virtue of solidarity* as the acquired capacity to maintain our humanness. More about the virtue of solidarity in the exposé to follow.

Having said this all, we prefer to define politeness in its most modest sense' to denote:

- kindness of manner
- benevolence
- forgiveness
- compassion and the strength to *connect* with others without anger, resentment, disrespect, rudeness, ill-temperedness and selfishness.

But the sad reality is, that most of the world do not see politeness in this manner. If they did, then the virtue of politeness would not continue to disintegrate everywhere as the pursuit of human's dignity is being scattered and being marred. In our frantic maternalistic and self-obsessed world, good old-fashioned politeness has been consigned to history. The focus now is on success and progress and anything that is considered as superfluous in form and action and not useful is discarded. Anything that delays the matter at hand and the goals to be achieved is not worth consideration. But that does not mean that the essential human need is not prevalent. The *virtue of* politeness in this divisive time has never been more important.

If you are looking for an easy way to improve your life and be more prosperous, then try to be polite and begin to *connect* with others. Politeness will help you to make lasting and positive impressions on others or at least provide you the opportunity to *connect* and open up to deeper interpersonal relations that in turn open up the chances for greater prosperity. As Arnold Bennet (cited in ed. Haden 2016) once said:

> You will make more friends in a week by getting yourself interested in other people than you can in a year by trying to get other people interested in you. (p. 3)

It is that simple! Politeness can help you 'connect'. The great thing is that others are more likely to be polite with you, so you reap at least what you sow at a minimum. As the best things in life are free, politeness costs nothing – perhaps only your ego and pride. But politeness can make a major difference in how people feel about themselves and about you. But politeness would not come easy. Politeness is not effortless. It is quite strange. It is so easy to say 'Thank you' and 'Please' but to protect the dignity of others and that of yourself:

- give others room and a free space
- protect them from oppressive closeness
- sincerely value others
- keep silent about your own goodness

- be considerate of the moods of others (especially your spouse and colleagues)
- sympathise with the weariness of others
- smooth out tense situations
- honour, acknowledge and celebrate others
- keep unpleasant things at a distance
- switch your cell phone off
- avoid being rude in situations such as when stuck in traffic
- entangle situations and conditions unintended and intended consequences that could lead to negativity
- resolve tension
- resist or moderate impulse of insolence.

To reach out beyond yourself in a deeply founded and appreciated sense of love is indeed not easy and a lifetime affair. If you are weak in politeness, the question then is how you can open the door to more fruitful engagements and create a 'feeling of fellowship' amongst those who are relating to you. If you are weak in politeness, first impressions, rightfully or wrongfully, will close doors to greater prosperity. It would be difficult to build a good mutually beneficial accord with others and trust, loyalty, respect, honour, forgiveness, fidelity, commitment and firmness in your mutual endeavours ultimately will suffer. In fact, it would be hard to convince others of your good faith and sincere desire to be of help. All the above are indeed precursors to sustainable prosperity, especially in a changing world where many other dimensions come into play and complicate matters. But do not despair. Politeness is an acquired capacity. Though it would require time and patience, you can master the required capacity.

So, let's take a look at some of the things that you can or rather ought to do to strengthen this very special capacity. Regrettably, we have to be brief. For the sake of brevity, we will 'run' through these tips as 'bullets'. Let us start:

- Always be polite. Practice politeness all the time without discrimination.

- Speak positively. When you make small talk, remain rather silent about your achievements and value and celebrate those of others.
- Make others feel valued, but in a sincere way.
- Begin by saying hello in the correct way.
- Be approachable by making eye contact and give a little nod to recognise someone.
- Know how to introduce yourself and others you know.
- Try to remember things important and valued about the other person and comment appropriately. This would require you to listen, listen and listen so that you can gather information.
- Do not big-time others.

You are not more important than others nor are your experiences and opinions more valuable. Respect the feelings of others and do not push your opinions, beliefs and prejudices onto others. Therefore, be careful of opinion and do not judge others:

- Stop oversharing personal information.
- Do not get involved in gossip and neither listen to it nor spread gossip.
- Use appropriate language. Always use 'please' or 'thank you'.
- Always express thanks.
- Use humour carefully.
- Quit cursing or using provocative terms that are offensive.
- Respect other people's time. Be punctual at all times.
- Do not brush over important issues that you know are prevalent between you and others.
- Give others space, by not taking up too much of their time.
- Also give them the opportunity to speak.
- If something embarrassing happened deal with it realistically and in an indifferent way to avoid further complications.
- Give second chances.
- Be always honest and sincere.
- Always practice good manners, that is, dress appropriately.

- Apply phone etiquette. Switch off your phone or put your phone on vibrate if you expect an urgent call and speak with a considerate and appropriate tone.
- Sympathise with the weariness of others but in a sincere way and not to talk down.
- Entangle uncomfortable situations by excusing yourself or using humour to lighten the moment.
- Be considerate of the mood of others. We all have our off days.
- Finally, and this we cannot emphasise enough. Acknowledge others and celebrate them!! Life is indeed in need of such an attitude to ensure continued prosperity.

Virtue #4: Self-differentiation

Amidst the growing interconnectedness between people, the increased diversity in culture, opinions, thoughts and views in individual societies, and the ever-increasing amount of information, there is one differentiating factor that would determine your future prosperity and wellbeing. That one factor is your ability to acquire the *principal virtue of self-differentiation*. Why do we say that and what makes this virtue so absolutely relevant to the changing circumstances? To answer this question, we have to be more fundamental than basic and superficial. We as humans do not exist in isolation. This point has emerged in the exposé on habits and virtues *many a times.* Because of the interconnectedness of humans, you are not immune to the interaction and emotions of people around you. Your emotions and actions aimed at the advancement of your personal wellbeing and prosperity and even your sense of self is to some degree shaped by and a part of an emotional sphere that is informed by people around you. It is your family, colleagues, business partners, customers, neighbours and strangers that impact on your thoughts, emotions, preferences, actions and conduct. Evidently, they influence you and you influence their emotions and psychological wellbeing; indirectly, their decisions, preferences

and conduct, even their prejudices. Yet, you have, depending on your ability to master the principal virtue of self-differentiation, the capacity to take an independent stance in life. You see, humans have a dual ability in this regard. *Firstly,* just as you are wired for co-regulation, in other words, to be regulated or informed by the emotions and decisions of others, you are by the grace of nature, functionally wired to regulate yourself. As you move between these two realms, you allow your emotional and cognitive systems to shift and drift between these two domains. This activity is cardinal to your existence in a changing world. You continue moving up and down these two domains to find your homeostasis or relative state that persists despite changes in the world outside. In maintaining your homeostasis or your stable internal emotional and cognitive state, the ability to apply self-differentiation is key. What then is meant with the term self-differentiation that we are referring to? Self-differentiation as a principal virtue is your capacity to freely choose a course of direction, standards of conduct, set of beliefs or prejudices, and to stay on course when reactive people or circumstances want to put you off course. But there is a deeper dimension to self-differentiation that is quite challenging to say the least. Self-differentiation is also a capability unique to humans, not only to stay on course or to stay focussed on your own functioning, both emotional and cognitive but in such a way to stay in touch with those that you converse and relate to. So, self-differentiation is the capacity that you ought to acquire to stand up and literally be 'counted' in matters of principle, belief, purpose, preferences and why you harbour some prejudices. But, concurrently making an effort to stay connected with your family, friends, colleagues, business partners and also the community as a larger organ of our human coexistence.

Having now broadly explained what we mean with the term 'self-differentiation', let us now go back and attend to the question, why we believe that self-differentiation is a principal virtue and ought to be included in our '7 Prosperity Virtues', and why we believe that this virtue is one of the most cardinal and

differentiating factors that would determine your future prosperity in a changing world. We hold the view that those societies and individual persons that will be most prosperous in a changing world will be those that are the most mindful and considerate in relating to the diverse cultures, beliefs, principles, opinions and prejudices that a growing diversified society hold. You will have to, for the sake of your long-term prosperity, master the capacity to differentiate between, to mention but a few instances, thoughts/issues that would require a well-developed sense of self-differentiation:

- feelings
- prejudices
- negative criticism
- tensions
- conflicts
- disagreements
- dissonance
- rejection and discrimination.

This is important because the challenge ahead is not simply to make up your mind so as to speak and move ahead, but rather to come to a careful and considerate assessment of what others are feeling: their emotions, prejudices and what their understandings are. So that when you make up your mind and move ahead with the required resolve, you do so in a way that others would have a better understanding of your own actions, principles, standard or beliefs, and that you move forward in ways that do not alienate or allow those that you depend on to succeed and prosper, to feel isolated and estranged. Then you can move forward with self-confidence and with the understanding and support of those that you rely upon. This way, you will be able to overcome negative criticism from those who wish to intimidate you or put you off course but most importantly to overcome the fear of what others may think about your thoughts and actions and not be further hindered to carry out your plans. It all comes down to your capacity to take a position in the midst of emotional forces and still remain connected with others through healthy and

conducive relations. We believe that this human capability to stay separated and focussed but staying close to others at the same time, and to move forward but concurrently move towards people in the middle of awkwardness, tension, conflict and through times of change, is indeed a universal virtue that applies at all times and meets our criteria to be included in the '7 Prosperity Virtues'.

Unfortunately, self-differentiation is easier said than done. If you would apply your mind, you may recall seeing many parties opting out of relationships, partnerships, agreements and accords because of tension and dissonance, rather than working effortlessly towards staying connected and reconciling and moving forward. Similarly, many great ideas and initiatives, especially in commerce, have not been further pursued because of undue criticism or because the person(s) has not developed the capacity to differentiate or is simply the cause of undifferentiated actions that cause the demise of what would have been noble and worthwhile. But there is a way out. You can acquire this capability. But to do that, you have to understand what causes undifferentiated action; how to avoid it and how to fix it. Before we offer you some suggestive 'tips', let's pause and just recap the apparent advantages of a person that has mastered the capacity of self-differentiation. *Firstly,* this principal virtue would help you to foster greater independence in thought and action without polarisation because the object of the virtue is togetherness without burdening progress. Related hereto, the acquired capability would neutralise the pull and drain of those coming from a position of entitlement and reduces possible tension triangles caused by obstructing forces that would like to create conflict. As you gain this particular capacity, you would be able to lead or proceed in a less complicated way with a higher leverage and pull factor, in times of transition or in a hostile and toxic environment. *Secondly,* as it is well-known that conflict could be very stressful and draining, this capacity in turn minimises the so-called 'burnout' and improves productivity and maintain a general decorum suitable to the changing conditions. A self-

differentiated person can more easily put their tensions on the table without hurting others because they do so in a spirit of humility and to further progress. Also, they have a higher credibility because they have the trust and confidence of those who the person relates and converses with. Teams of people who are being led by a self-differentiated person are also less likely to experience internal tension and conflict. Tension and conflict are addressed through a culture of self-awareness, self-assessment and intellectual humility that allows more openness and the acceptance of divergent thoughts and ideas. *Thirdly,* a person who is proficient in self-differentiation is very mindful of their own weaknesses, strengths, prejudices and hidden biases, and takes responsibility for them. A self-differentiated person believes in constantly asking feedback because they value it and are committed to continuous learning. They constantly keep asking themselves what they can do better and having that realisation that they are not perfect and apply compassion and forgiveness to self and also to others. *Fourthly,* self-differentiated persons do not take things personally. They are most inclined through self-assessment to objectively determine areas they need to improve. They also have the capacity to face up to what is true, wholesome, false and prideful in their lives, and are most willing to embrace the truth and value the truth more than their dignity. All in all, a self-differentiated person has the capability to act more objectively in a non-reactive way and by self-determination. It is then these four capabilities of a self-differentiated person that discern you from the undifferentiated person.

Before we proceed to lay out what you can do to become more self-differentiated and begin, if you are not already, enjoying the fruits of this particular virtue, we have to bring to your attention what causes undifferentiated thoughts and actions to occur. You may associate yourself with some or all of the causes to be listed. Whichever, this could direct you to those areas in your life, work and play that you could do better and advance your self-differentiated capabilities. It can also help you to see where others go astray and when you should act with even

greater resolve to stay independent and connected. So, when do you cause undifferentiated thoughts and actions to occur? Firstly, you are quickly offended, easily provoked, too sensitive and then on top of it all, very slow to recover and regain your homeostatic state. Secondly, when you find yourself to be uptight, serious, defensive and cannot relax and be at ease so that you can regain your sensibility and reasonableness. Thirdly, when you react more instinctively and automatically without a true understanding of the facts, emotions, prejudices, past painful experiences, and fearfulness within yourself and the interlocking person(s) involved. Fourthly, when you are underhanded, dishonest, unauthentic, and are thriving and blossoming in a state of entitlement where no boundaries and principles of engagement are clearly set out and upheld. Related to the last, when you are demanding, wilfully stubborn, unbending and resentful. Fifthly, when you blame, criticise and constantly find fault and have poor discerning of what is proportionate and correct for your age, circumstances, time and duty. Sixthly, when you think in black and white, yes or no, they or me, and when you are intolerant of ambiguity and have an attitude of wanting all or nothing and are seeking final solutions when the time is not ripe. Seventh, when you always wish to fight it out until a winner is declared and obviously you could vindicate yourself. Then you see life not as an experience to be lived but rather a contest. Eighth, when your actions and thought processes are vague, ambiguous, hidden with no clear principles and objectives, beating around the bush without coming to the point or, even worse, avoiding the issues at hand. Ninth, when you feel you are losing an argument and begin to 'lash out' without a strong rationality that leaves you exposed. Finally, when you create too little space for others to be themselves or set too many boundaries and dictate as one-sided solutions for a complex interwoven process. How would you fix this or even better what capabilities are needed or what steps can be taken to avoid undifferentiated thoughts and actions occurring that cause separation, conflict and even disintegration? To achieve this, it is not easy. You may consider some of the

following suggestions to advance your capacity and proficiency. Here are what we suggest you do in no particular sequence: Firstly, you have to understand yourself better and the relating person(s). You have to establish, first and foremost what are the shared universal values, rules, principles and standards that you and the interlocking person(s) apply in life and even more importantly, the commitment of the interlocking parties to the future. Here your observation and past experiences come into play. Stay awake and aware in your observations. Secondly, be perceptive and in tune with the thoughts, feelings and emotions of your own and try to observe same in the others. Here you have to be able to be careful not to be 'cold' and indifferent but do your assessment with a strong 'fellow feeling' and sympathy. The old saying is true in this case. Try to place yourself in the position of the other(s). We have touched on this many a times. This is important for a well narrated situational awareness that you ought to establish with a deep breath of understanding. In your assessment of your own feelings and emotions, try to avoid being vague or choked up by too many thoughts and emotions all at the same time. Likewise, do not let your thought process jump up and down like a cat on a hot plate. It is better to simplify your thoughts and feelings rather than allow it to complicate matters. Here you should distinguish between rational or cognitive influences versus feelings and emotions. Here you have to choose situationally which way you are going to proceed. Congruent with the aforesaid situational awareness, you have to distinguish between those influences which are caused by the *intra psyche* and *interpersonal* processes. In the case of the former, you differentiate your thoughts from your emotions and see what influences what. Are your thoughts and objectives real, or emotionally clouded. In the case of the interpersonal processes, you differentiate your experiences from the experiences of the others. Are the experiences overlapping or distinctively separate. This is very important in order to determine your situational environment and the state of mind. Here you have to be very mindful that you take responsibility for your own thoughts and

emotions and how accurate your recollection of your personal experiences are. Define and refine as the engaging process continues and set your ego aside, more and more. Having done the situational awareness and having differentiated between the rational or cognitive, feelings and emotions, and respective experiences, you will be far better equipped to self-manage and shape the environment and be much more resourceful. Having come to some workable understanding of the reliable values and principles and the convergence or divergence of the experiences, you will be able to move ahead with confidence and greater objectivity, and will not be quickly offended and be overly sensitive. This way you can remain true to yourself, quickly recover and stay connected. To do this, you have to first understand the others before you expect of the others to understand where you are coming from. This way your response will be more intentional and thoughtful and less reactive, instinctive, automotive and prideful. In doing so you would begin to act with greater receptiveness, openness and act in the light of truth, fairness and what is just and proportional. Furthermore, you have to be relaxed and at ease in order to be more sensible and reasonable as this will go a long way helping you to stay independent in thought and action, yet connected with the feelings, emotions, facts and experiences that make up the course of thought and actions of the interlocking person(s). Avoid going into a wrestling match. If need be, withdraw for a whilst to avoid the temptation to fight it out until there is a champion. Rather see the process unfolding as a game of tennis, where someone serves and the other returns the serve, until the game point is achieved and then turn service to allow the opponent to respond. Finally, do not engage in situations where there is either no space for you to move skilfully and carefully. Set boundaries, a frame of reference, points of discussion, that are ethically tolerable and requirement of the time. Associated with that are common values, principles, goals and limitations. Remember orderliness in method and structure and cleanliness in thought, word and conduct are key differentiating factors here. In other words, to be able to think

and act in a self-differentiated way, keep the following points upfront in your mind:

- intentionality
- objective awareness
- self-directiveness
- dignity
- genuineness
- truthfulness
- boundaries
- commonalities
- not to be too serious
- understanding and observing silence.

This may appear to be quite a challenge and believe us, it is! Luckily, there are other influencing virtues that, if you also attain them, the principal object of self-differentiation will be far more serviceable and achievable. We wish now, to touch briefly on four influencing virtues. These virtues are (1) be authentic, (2) focus on understanding first, (3) observe silence and (4) use humour appropriately.

Let's start off by explaining why being authentic is very helpful in becoming better in your self-differentiation. An authentic person is a more truthful person. True to who the person is, what principles and values the person upholds, and is more often than not, free from a state of falsehood and is less pretentious. These aspects of human conduct provide further strength and resolve to be self-differentiated. An authentic person is not involved *but* only involved and lives life with passion and resolves that are not founded on arbitrary or hedonistic self-interest, but most often to make a truthful contribution to life in a very unique and original way. Being authentic in this context should not be confused with self-indulgence and the aesthetics of self. Our interpretation of being authentic is to live a truthful life that focusses on the 'self' transcending and the strong desire to overcome the limits and boundaries of the individual self. This is pursued by an authentic person through responses to life that are a unique reflection of

the mystery of life as they observe life through their unique experiences. It takes courage and genuine love of life to uncover the mysteries that might not be welcomed by others. There is indeed the risk in being honest whilst at the same time being exposed to others. We therefore are of the view that being authentic has a positive influence and is indeed very supportive of any effort to advance the capability of self-differentiation. Self-differentiation as a human capacity is furthermore provided with greater power, influence and effect because an authentic person possesses certain capabilities. They are true to themselves, high in character and not unfamiliar to risk in maintaining a discerning mindset. They are very mindful and aware of situational conditions. They live in the moment with keen awareness of the mysteries unfolding and always open to listening to new ideas. These characteristics of the authentic person are congruent with and amplify the values and conduct of a self-differentiated person. Therefore, you have to focus on being truly authentic in your expression of the mystic that you experience and the truth you are uncovering.

This brings us to the importance of why you ought to understand others first. Every person has his or her own centre which relates experiences and attitudes and so stand apart from the general context. In this sense, a human being carries an interior world within self that is not at all times so clear to the person itself. In understanding others, you are able to read or grasp, comprehend and envisage the interior meaning of the other person(s) in consequence to the external condition(s). You would come to know who the person is; why the person says certain things in a certain context; why the person has become who the person is and how to face up to that person. All of this is contributing to your intelligence or the way you understand the situation or matter at hand. No wonder the Latin verb is *intelegere* which means 'to understand'. You can only respond affectively if you have intelligence or a better understanding. But why it is so difficult to understand others. The problem is that understanding others or to obtain intelligence about them requires something

from the person observing rather than from the person observed. If you wish to understand others better, you have to step out of your own little world or preconceptions, deep seated feelings of aversion that may exist, and take on a third-party observer framework of mind that is more objective and free of constraints. Then you have to temporarily forgo your likes, dislikes, prejudices and truths, and be open to give others what you claim for yourself and that is, the right to exist, the right to your own opinions and the right to be the best the person you can be. It all starts with liberties such as equality and freedom that allow others to develop their own original interior that ought to be respected. Why is this so important to achieve greater self-differentiation? Firstly, your commitment to listen and to understand would let the other person sincerely feel that in your eyes, the person could reach completeness of being, with all the aesthetics and wonder that accompanies life. In other words, the other person could see in your eyes that which the person is meant to be and desirous to be. Secondly, that you could see the purest and the most authentic version of yourself in the understanding of others. Thirdly, that you could see the potentiality that is still dormant in the person observed and that moves you to help the person uncover and expose at the same. This way the true benefits of the virtue of self-differentiation come to light.

But this would require a further capacity to master, the *virtue of silence*. In the discussion of self-differentiation, we briefly touched on the internal process of homeostasis that means the formation of a stable internal emotional as well as cognitive state. This process, most of the time, happens in the course of life as it is unfolding. This happens at meetings, at the dinner table, discussions between husband and wife, etc. Most of the time the process occurs amidst the hustle and bustle and noises flowing across. With the result that the outcome is not so pure and clean at all times. This is where the *virtue of silence* comes into play. The virtue of silence is an acquired capability and not everyone finds comfort in silence. However, you have to strive to conquer the endless chatter and the frivolous and idle talk. You

have to take a leap of faith and practice silence. This could include:

- a 10 min meditation
- a weekend retreat
- a long weekend run in preparation of your next marathon race
- listening to quality music or reading a good novel.

The moment of silence will let the 'curtains come down' and believe us, new perspectives, ideas, understanding, insight and resolve will emerge.

But it can be something more in the moment. When you remain silent when you have the right to speak, you are gaining more intelligence by improved understanding. The virtue of silence would therefore help you to open your ears to new ideas, solutions, prejudices and opinions. And when you do 'break the silence' speak to what is beneficial to others and yourself, speak what is truthful, kind and what would make a difference. This is not to say that you should not engage in friendly, everyday conversations, but do try to be truly differentiated in your engagements.

This brings us to the importance of leveraging humour to establish connection with others or to convey something very serious in a more playful and less painful way. Humour is also very useful to endure discomfort that arises in interpersonal relations more easily. In fact, you would hardly get along without it. Because the person who sees others in this world only seriously, only morally or pedagogically, cannot be endured for any great length of time with the result that connectedness with other withers. But here we do not only talk about jokes and stand-up comedy. Humour in our context is a virtue or a capacity to see and vividly experience the oddity, the quirkiness, the kink, the twists and the contradictions of life – all of life. This life has always something comic about it. The most pompous, academic, politically correct, intellectual person or acts can be comic and funny. A laugh, now more than ever, and to rely on comic moments, would help you relax and be more at ease and with that comes

greater kindness, humbleness, lightness, ease and lucidity. This is what humour is bringing to the table and would help you to master the virtue of self-differentiation much quicker. So, let us smile, laugh, relay comic stories, tell a joke or two. But stay connected and at ease so that you can be who you wish to be. Then you have mastered the *virtue of self-differentiation* which we believe is key to your long-term prosperity in a changing world.

■ Virtue #5: Vitality

Given the speed of change, accompanied by uncertainty, the emergence of new opportunities and new technological advances, it would be fair to say, based on present-day experiences, that the way you live, work, and play will undergo major changes in the changing world unfolding. The nature and the extent of these changes are not entirely known. Suffice to say that given the present-day changes and our analysis of the changing world until 2045, you will experience changes at least on three levels. They are: technological, attitudinal and intergenerational. If you wish to benefit from the new opportunities and make the best of the changing landscape, then you cannot approach the changing conditions with an attitude of insipidity, inactiveness, lethargy, dullness and with the lack of passion and a weak internal 'fire' for adventure. What in our view is needed is to have *vitality*. Vitality as a human capacity, as we will further explain, is a good elixir for any insipidity, lethargy or lack of drive that might obstruct your long-term prosperity in a changing world. Hence, we have elected to include the *principal virtue of vitality* in the list of '7 Prosperity Virtues'. We are of the view that this virtue, would, if duly mastered, bring more strength and regularity to the general habit of practicing self-care as identified in Chapter 5 on *7 Habits for a changing world.*

Why is vitality such an important capacity to possess in our drive to achieve excellence and maintaining calm proficiency in a changing world? Many thousands of books and articles have

been written on this subject. Therefore, what now follows is not at all complete, but only a reminder of selected salient points on vitality as a virtue that could awaken or at least 'refresh' your mind to the reasons why vitality should rate high on your list of priorities and the benefits you would gain by mastering the *virtue of vitality.* Let's get back to the question at hand. The short and sweet answer to the question is: *Vitality makes your day light and bright.* Much can be said about this narrative but essentially vitality overcomes the modern-day disease of depletion and lights up a fire in your belly that enables you to live a passionate, most fulfilling and prosperous life. You see, if you live in a society with absolute abundance, that is if you are living in a modern industrial society, you might have observed yourself that most people notwithstanding the abundance suffer from the disease of depletion. You perhaps like most work terribly hard, enjoying a reasonable income, have been able to meet all the basic requirements to be comfortable, spending thousands of dollars yearly on medicine and supplements or relies on consumer goods to gratify you and in so doing you are caught up in a cycle of work, earn, spend, sleep and repeat. With all the abundance, you may feel that you are still falling short. You may be one of the billions that lack energy, focus, inspiration and passion; you constantly feel that something is missing, making you unsure of life or even worse, finding no real joy in all the awe, wonder and beauty that life has to offer. The sad reality is that this disease of depletion will become even worse in future. Currently, on average, you experience about 20 000 moments (Chowdhury 2006:8) each day and these experiences are gradually weakening your energy and in the case of millions of people, it has destroyed the energy that they require to experience each of the moments right when they occur, rather than in hindsight, recognised as missed opportunities. Therefore, too many people feel frazzled, stressed, lethargic, dull, unfocussed, emotionally confused and simply lazy. They struggle from day to day and turn to comfort foods, drugs alcohol and in some cases even to excessive exercising to smooth out the unstable emotions. They even try to 'pop-up' their energy

levels and mental focus with supplements, energy drinks, caffeine and exercising. What people really need, and we suggest that if you can associate with one or more of these conditions described above, is a serious dosage of *vitality*. *Vitality is a way of life* that allows you to live the most fulfilling life and making the most of every day. Vitality makes you energetic, passionate, resolute, resilient, focussed to face up to daily challenges and grasp new opportunities 'by the horns'. Vitality makes you feel 'revved up' and ready to go! Many more narratives and adjectives can be added to contextualise this lifestyle, such as confidence, high spirited, thrilling, excellence, health; empathy and so the list goes on. This is no over exaggeration. Persons with vitality do not simply exist, they live with passion, focus, compassion, joy and above all also find inspiration from others and will persist to work with excellence and complete whatever task they undertake. They approach life with energy and excellence, and not doing things halfway nor half-heartedly. All these narratives and buzz words are but a very weak way of describing a person that possesses vitality. You will however recognise a person who possesses vitality when you see and experience it. They stand out from the crowd. They are like, the saying goes. 'the butchers dog' or the 'shining pennies'.

Having briefly introduced the *virtue of vitality*, let us now try to layout some of the foundational elements of vitality as a virtue. This is very important because the term vitality is so often and in fact, almost always, misused. In the western world, the physical dimension of vitality is well established. In the West, vitality is used in conjunction with or describing physical energy. The focus is on physical exercise. In this context, vitality is the cherry on top of the cake of life – the frosting. Vitality is often portrayed as a way of life that plays out in exercise regimes, special diets, spas and wellness retreats – getting the point! But there is so much more to possessing the *virtue of vitality* or having the capacity to live life with great enthusiasm and energy. Or to live life with ZEST. In the ancient traditions in the East such as China, India, Thailand and South Korea, as is the case with many indigenous

cultures, *vitality* encompasses both the physical and psychological aspects. For these communities, the power of influence of the *virtue of vitality* is also vested in the environment you find yourself in: meaning, your attitude to life, personal integrity and spiritual purpose. As the West views vitality as the 'frosting on the cake of life' – that something extra that makes life even better, the Eastern traditions and many indigenous cultures view the *virtue of vitality* as the main ingredient of life. Now, here we admit, this may be a very simplified interpretation of something that is evolving rapidly in the modern day. But going back to the classic etymology as opposed to the contemporary analysis, *vitality* as a word is derived from 'Vita' or 'Life' (Dean 2020:1) that places the emphasis on 'feeling of aliveness'. But this is not a full explanation of the word. In Greek, 'vitality' denotes 'Bios' or 'Life' and in Latin 'Vitalitas' incorporates elements 'pertaining to life' (VirtueScience 2020:4). In Greek, you would also find an additional and related word that defines 'life' even further. The word is 'Zoe' that can be loosely translated as a person's 'essence' (Guthrie 2007:2). So, considering the word 'vitality' hermeneutically, 'vitality' could mean that you have the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual energy and resources to live a life of prosperity and liberty. In other words, a fulfilling life. For us this, broader concept of 'vitality' makes more sense. Because you may have clean arteries, a high oxygen absorption capacity, be able to run a marathon under 4 h or be able to lift 300 kg, but without spiritual grounding, and here we do not refer to the more narrow concept of religion, you will find it difficult to live a purposeful and meaningful life and will be missing upon a fundamental element – 'feeling alive'. You may correctly so, question the use of the general term of 'feeling alive' as the terminus of the *virtue of vitality*. We guess this term is nuanced and needs further clarification. The approach we suggest, and that is perhaps worth considering, is that we contextualise the term 'feeling alive' in association with 'life satisfaction'. Life satisfaction measures up more favourably against life expectations because the latter is still 'unborn', whilst the former is a lived

experience. Life satisfaction is also related to time and age and more real than expectations. So, our suggestion is to measure the emotion of 'feeling alive' in terms of 'successful aging'. What we mean by 'successful aging' is simply that you could live a satisfying life according to your age and dignity. In other words, to be able to have the required enthusiasm, passion and energy, as the 'flaming feeling' within, the strength to endure and having a well-defined understanding of your meaning and purpose according to your age and dignity. In our humbled view, the most important ingredient of successful aging, is to have the *capacity to reinvent* yourself so that you can face up to the changing conditions and opportunities unfolding. Here, it is all about human dignity, energy, resolve and the feeling of aliveness. In essence, the *virtue of vitality* is having an 'athlete heart' where you have the resilience to endure physical, emotional and mental conditions because you have a strong purpose. You possess a strong 'athlete heart' when the meaning of life as you have defined it for yourself provides the flaming fire within to endure whatever physical, emotional and mental challenges you have to face. You see the circularity. Vitality is therefore about the careful stewardship of, the biological, psychological and spiritual elements of being so that you can live a life with the highest level of self-realisation fit for your age, conditions, responsibilities and dignity. Granted, the definition is still general. However, we believe that our suggestive approach could go a long way to clarify what could be a less ambiguous term for *vitality.* This broader approach to vitality is very much consistent with the work done by the Institute of Aging and Allianz Life (Guthrie 2007:3). Dan Buettner has done a decade's worth of research on human longevity. He travelled the world, looking for people who have lived extraordinary long and healthy lives. Buettner notes that whilst people's vitality is greatly influenced by diet and activity, things like a sense of life purpose, balanced and solid spiritual practices, family bonds and community engagement are also of vital importance. It not only affects how long people live but also how vital they remain as they age (Guthrie 2007:3).

With the aforesaid in mind, let's focus on how best you could advance your vitality as a capacity towards human excellence. There are indeed many dimensions or elements to this question. From training regimes, diets, supplements, smart food to elements of world view, how to build emotional resilience and mental focus and many, many more. But all of this can perhaps, at least from our perspective, be collapsed into one cardinal element. If you address this cardinal element, you would place yourself on the *path of vitality* and a much-heightened life satisfaction and self-realisation. This element is 'disconnection'. We cannot claim to be the authors of this novel deduction. But we, from our advantage point, agree with author and healing arts educator, Constance Grand's conclusions (Dean 2020:4). Constance, after spending 10 years with tribes in the Peruvian Amazon jungle isolated from modern-day medicine, supplements, special diets and highly focussed exercising regimes and studying traditional medicine, concluded that human diseases and suffering are primarily caused by 'disconnection'. He includes here disconnection from different forms of nourishment, the 'self', community, nature or spiritual sources. At the base of any such 'disconnection', Constance observed, there is a core fear these indigenous tribes of Central and South America refer to as 'susto'. According to Constance, it comes from – at least in their culture, from a major life trauma, shock and near-death experiences. In the modern industrial world with all its diverse challenges, the causes of fear are growing by the day. You might not be too fearful that a snake bite would kill you or that it would be the cause of a 'near-death' experience. No! you may be fearful because you might be retrenched, your business after COVID-19 may be liquidated and you would not be able to fulfil your commitments, etc. Once the fear is properly attended to, Constance observed, then 'susto' begins to dissipate. Constance further observed that people in affluent societies are chronically affected by fear. The Penn University (Dean 2020:1) also observed that a fear of pain is negatively associated with vitality. Individuals who were seeking treatment for external (e.g. family pressure)

rather than internal reasons were less likely to experience vitality. The net outcome and consequential effects of all the fear-based disconnectedness is one massive vitality drain. The energy that leaks, ought to be plugged and the connections literally have to be built. What is needed is much more than exercising, supplements, diets, anti-anxiety medication or anti-aging creams. You have to connect with your sources of vitality. That what makes you grounded, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. This is the end terminus of the *virtue of vitality to restore your homeostatic state.* Stephen Vizinczey (VirtueScience 2020) says it beautifully:

> The only virtue a character needs to possess between hard covers, even if he bears a real person's name is vitality: if he comes to life in our imaginations, he passes the test. (p. 4)

You may ask at this point, how the *virtue of vitality* would proactively and in real practical terms change your character and how vitality would contribute to your life satisfaction and self-realisation and general prosperity. We will offer eight points for consideration. Yet, only briefly. You may pursue further reading on this important subject. Vitality brings happiness in your life, work and play dimensions of being. It results in having better relationships (quite joyful). The eight consequential benefits are:

- increased endurance and flexibility
- enhanced satisfaction of what you are engaged with
- heightened self-realisation and expression of joy and happiness
- unleashed unfatigued energy
- greater courage and strength to mitigate the fear for fears
- ability to relax deeply and intensely
- turnoff emotionally and mentally on command
- finally, mental focus so that you can consistently be at your 'A-game'.

Let's be frank – this is what prescription medicine and supplements predictably suggest that the product can possibly achieve. But what in fact is required is to follow certain practical steps and master specific elements that are more virtuous and that will

enhance your vitality. The rest will be history! However, before we go further, we as avid marathoners and gym chunkies understand the role and place of supplements, anti-inflammatory medicine, diets and training regimes. We do not wish to down talk what we also rely on during training. But from experience, they only bring you so far. If you have not the 'athlete heart', you will find it difficult to finish what you start or if you do see it through, it will completely deplete your vitality and you will lack the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual resilience to start your recovery run the next day.

So what practical and virtuous steps could you consider for boosting your vitality? Here again, the list is quite long therefore we only bring a few to your attention that you may consider:

- Firstly, change your perspective, as vitality does not deteriorate as you age.
- Focus on all levels of vitality not just the physical.
- Find your unique purpose and meaning as this will create the flame within that makes you resilient and focussed.
- Plug the energy drain by being less fearful and focus on the energies in your body – the subtle vibrations that the wrong food or supplement cause in your body.
- Focus your energy and going in the direction of health and wellness rather than overburdening your life with excessive behaviour.
- Boost your energy naturally through smart foods, saying mantras to stay calm and being at ease.
- Build a reserve of energy by eating for energy and gaining enough sleep to recover physically, emotionally and mentally.
- Be consciously aware of life in the moment and remain mindful of the awe, wonder and beauty of life – both the good and the bad.
- Read spiritual books, autobiographies and listen to the podcasts of inspirational speakers. Not only a speaker on the topic of inspiration but preferably speakers that have inspirational life stories to share.

- Surround yourself with nature. We are from the soil of Africa so forgive us when we suggest you spent at least 1 week a year on an adventure trip to Africa.
- Find the meaning in the lived experiences.
- Practice stillness and even solitude.
- Keep a journal – it can be very inspiring to recollect past experiences.
- Complete a vitality test – there are many tests available, so check out 'Blue Zones Compass', a 33-part questionnaire designed to map the state of a person's body, mind and lifestyle (Guthrie 2007:5).
- Finally, simplify your lifestyle. Do not let your gluttony drain your energy and do not let your possessions possess you.[1] (More about this interesting topic in the discussion to follow.)

■ Virtue #6: Thriftiness

In our analysis of the changing world, one narrative is evident and we would argue, most evidently, that narrative is progress – progress – progress! Congruent with that is more and more opportunities. We are therefore of the view that what is most needed for continued prosperity is to have a mindset that focusses on progress and to master those capacities that would be responsive to the growing opportunities and make these the most habitual element of your character that you can leverage in helping you to prosper. In other words, having the capacity to ensure that you respond rather than merely react to the unfolding opportunities in ways that would ensure your continued progress and prosperity. For this reason, we have elected to include the principal *virtue of thriftiness*. The *virtue of thriftiness* as a principal virtue denotes the human capacity to grow vigorously. This virtue is a universal mark of a good economy and good management of both opportunities and resources. The *virtue of thriftiness* leads to greater progress and prosperity because it is a good elixir for prodigality, extravagance, squandering and wastefulness.

1. More about this interesting topic in the discussion to follow.

Narratives or let's rather call it by their name, 'vices', have become entrenched in the consumer sovereign society of the modern world. Initially, continuous increased consumption was a real driver of economic progress from the 1930s onwards, but it has now reached a tipping point and if we allow unfettered consumerism to continue, the environment could suffer irreparable consequences that will make human prosperity in the long run quite doubtful. To correct the present-day anomalies and to ensure that you are most capable of making the best use of the new opportunities, we have included in this discussion on the principal *virtue of thriftiness,* four influencing virtues. These four influencing virtues are (1) frugality, (2) industry, (3) imagination and (4) creativity. The *virtue of frugality* suggests that you have your affairs in order. How you spend your money and use other resources in your possessions in order to live a fulfilling life. In other words, you live within your means and do not waste your resources. The key here is that you know how to enjoy life and live with abundant frugality. The *virtue of industry* is suggestive of the fact that you have the required capacity to be most proficient and prolific and that you make every hour of your day and every resource in your possession count. Then follow the two associated virtues. In mastering the *virtue of imagination*, you become a 'co-creator' with nature and literarily dream the world into being in order to support human prosperity and wellbeing. This is personally for us, one of the most amazing virtues that is clearly suggestive of a superhuman power that is laying out what has been predestined and what has been provided long before we as humans become aware of it. *The virtue of creativity* is the real 'gem' or rather star in this constellation of the four influencing virtues. This virtue provides the capacity and potential for you to create something novel, valuable and worthwhile.

These four influencing virtues work in unison like an ecosystem in support of the *principal virtue of thriftiness* of which the focus is overall progress through the proficient and prolific use of resources and opportunities. We do not claim that the discussion

to follow is complete in its analysis. The discussion only touches on a few salient aspects that we claim to be indicative of the relative influence of these virtues in support of the principal virtue. Regrettably once more, we have to be brief, but who knows, what may happen in future because those that are thrifty will always be rewarded with progress, so may be a further book could follow. All playfulness aside! Let's begin this discussion with why an abundant frugal life is wholesome and very much needed for a changing world. The term 'abundant frugal living' may sound like an oxymoron or contradiction. But it is not! People often think that *frugality* is about doing without and that they have to deny themselves of the pleasurable and sensual things in life. Therefore, we prefer the narrative 'abundant frugality'. Here the focus is on bountifulness whilst you are essentially economical with resources. *Abundant frugality* is a real human capacity or rather a valued human capacity. *Abundant frugality* means that you are appreciative of what you have and you make the best use of your resources to accomplish your goals and the lifestyle that you have set for yourself. In this broad sense, *abundant frugality* has two sides that are intertwined. *Firstly,* you make no expense but to do good to yourself and also others. *Secondly,* you do just that without wasting anything. Frugal living is, therefore, a series of deliberate and mindful decisions that you take to live within your means, and it is equally important to not squander what you have. The motivating factor here is not your miserliness or being reluctant to part with your money or to share your resources with others, but because you are grateful of what has been entrusted to you and that you would like to be a good steward. Therefore, equally important is that you know how to enjoy life and know what is needed to live with abundance, meaning you know you have more than you need, yet without wasting what you have. Abundant frugality is therefore essential to live with bountifulness, economy and simplicity without being miserly or penny-pinching. Here are a few examples from real-life experiences as established in the Stanley study (2001:36). As these practical examples illustrate an established pattern of conduct of the majority of the

millionaire respondents included in the study, they may indeed be considered as elements of the 'hallmark of affluence'. It has been founded in the study that respondents rather purchase a regular motor vehicle than a luxury one. If only one or two persons use the vehicle, they buy something small and they take good care of the vehicle so that it lasts for years. They look for store brands that they enjoy as much as big-name brands. Affluent people staying in their homes longer than anticipated. They use credit cards as a payment method, rather than as an additional credit line. Seventy per cent of the respondents regularly resole and repair their shoes. Nearly one-half of them, in fact 48%, have their furniture reupholstered or refurnished instead of buying new furniture. About 7 out of 10 use a shopping list when they go shopping and more importantly, they stick diligently to the list. Nearly one-half of them buy household supplies in bulk at warehouse stores. When it comes to durable goods, they are not overly concerned about the price but consider the durability or the expected lifespan and view the price in accordance. Buying cheap has proven to be expensive in the long run. These are only a few illustrative examples of *abundant frugality* as a capacity to be reflective and mindful in the use of resources. The focal point is economy and proficiency rather than to be 'penny wise pound foolish'. Considering the virtue from such a perspective, the benefits could be manifold. Abundant frugality could keep you out of bondage as you are not too overburdened by debt. It helps you build financial discipline. Makes you more self-reliant. Enjoying a much higher product satisfaction. Abundant frugal living helps to embrace the real you by not carving your image and character through your possessions but rather the other way around.

If you are mindful of these benefits and wish to learn to be more frugal and live bountifully, you may consider the following tips that would increase your capabilities. Firstly, try to strike a balance between what you need and what you are spending money on. Determine your necessary expenses. Categorise your expenses into what is considered sustenance or nourishment;

protection, such as clothing, shelter and reoccurring household costs; health expenditure; social expenditure that include meeting your duties to your family, friends and other associates; expenditure on wellness such as sports activities, mental growth and education; a stabilisation fund for unexpected expenses and a retirement fund. You also may follow the strategy to bring your desires in line with your present means. Avoid creating a long list of desires and increase your desires only when your means permit it. Otherwise, you will frustrate yourself. Take your time literally to consider what you want to buy, especially expensive goods. This is all part of the fun leading up to the possible purchase of something that you have for so long aspired to buy. Here, use the 30-day rule. Wait 30 days to buy something that is pricy and that is not necessarily what you need at that moment, but rather something that you want. Again, here the proviso is that the purchase should not create excessive debt. Be prudent, meaning rather be careful and be willing to walk away if you are in doubt of the unintended consequences. Take pride in the ability to say no and do not allow yourself to be dragged into buying something or departing with a possession(s) that may be useful to you. Use affirmations to your benefit. When you drive in your 6-year-old Toyota SUV, say to yourself that it is paid off and that it is a sign that you are indeed or about to have your affairs in order. Take limited pleasure in comfort buys but rather focus on that which will positively affect you as a person and that which would bring you closer to those things that you would love to experience. If you love to feel what it is like to drive a Ferrari then save the money to rent one for a day. If you would like to run an overseas marathon, you may consider to keep your Toyota SUV for two more years and use the savings on your hire purchase instalments to cover the cost of your overseas marathon. This is exactly what one of us did. Reduce or eliminate costly habits such as eating unhealthy foods. You might feel good at that moment but later on your discomfort, uneasiness and lack of energy will take more from you and there will only be one loser – and that's you. Avoid the constant need for gratification. There is a time for everything

in life, also for pleasurable things. Finally, think in terms of saving as well as earning. Saving or reducing costs are equally valuable in financial terms as earning an income. You can increase your financial resources through earnings as well as savings. What is the take from this? Abundant frugality is not to suggest that you abstain and 'live a life below par'. To do something that the outcome is aimed at being 'below par' is useful in golf and not necessary for your whole life. However, the focus ought to be on 'right thinking, rather than on high living'. 'Right thinking is about modulating your indulgence of materialistic appetites and pleasurable desires with the intention that you leave space for the cultivation of diverse forms of experiencing an abundant life'. If you have to choose between 'things' or 'experiences', choose the latter. From our perspective, we will more than less prefer exceptional experiences and to gain knowledge and wisdom over temporal 'things' that depreciate in value or are simply consumed with very limited and lasting benefits. This is only our consideration. You may have others, but ultimately having mastered the virtue of *abundant frugality* you will be able to make deliberate applied decisions that are trade-offs between an enriched and fulfilling life and a life of instant gratification. This then is the *virtue of abundant frugality*.

Now let's move on to a much forgotten virtue, that is the *virtue of industry*. With the virtue of *abundant frugality*, the principal focus is on the capabilities to save and not to waste. The *virtue of industry*, on the other hand, denotes the human capability that focuses on doing something useful, not losing time and to cut off unnecessary activities. This virtue is therefore about mastering the capacity to engage in something useful and to be proficient and prolific in doing just that. In times where we all are facing 24/7 distractions, be it through social media, online entertainment and where our work–life balance is being challenged because of the weakening division between work and life and bosses and spouses, this virtue ought to be re-interpreted to become the powerful tool it used to be. During

the 18th century, people such as Adam Smith and Benjamin Franklin, both proponents of economic progress, have vehemently advanced the *virtue of industry*. The term 'industry' may be confusing. The term has first been noted in the late Middle English period in France. The term is coming from the Latin word 'industria' that denotes 'diligence or purposeful'*.* Over the years, the *virtue of industry* has become associated with the ethic of hard work. What then followed is an affirmation that the 'harder you work the luckier you become'. To simplify matters, we have for the purpose of this discussion, adopted this understanding of the *virtue of industry*. Namely hard work or diligence leads to success. The virtue of industry, notwithstanding the fact that college and university textbooks on economies do not have a chapter on the importance of this human capability as a major production factor, is considered by 94% of millionaires in the Stanley study (2001:147) as vital for business success. But perhaps equally important, this virtue is an important capability to reduce or contain fears, stress and worries (Stanley 2001:147). The respondents rate hard work next to socialising with other people as vital in order to be prosperous (Stanley 2001:110). This does not mean that you have to become a workaholic. To the contrary, the *virtue of industry* is about proficiency and to be prolific. To work smart and to be able to focus your energy on maximising your returns on your effort. This you achieve by ensuring that you firstly engage in activities that you are most 'proficient' in and secondly, that you increase your output by mastering the art of 'prolific quality output' (PQO) (Burchard 2017:188). Meaning doing what is 'prolific' or what renders plentiful. Burchard (2017:188) describes 'prolific' as 'the cupcake store owner who can figure out the two bestselling flavours and expanding production and distribution on just these two flavours'. Or the blogger who knows that frequent and better content ought to be the focus to have a prolific blog. In this context, the *virtue of industry* is not 'to work hard or smart' but rather it is 'how you are smart'*.* No wonder that successful and wealthy millionaires in the Stanley study (2001:25) considered

hard work as more important than genetic high intellect as factors in achieving economic and business success. This reminds us of what the French satiric Moralist, Jean de la Bruyere (Virtue. net 2011:2) once wrote: 'There are only two ways by which to rise in the world, either by one's own industry or by the stupidity of others'

Here again, hard work should not be equated with working a lot and many hours. The focus ought to be on the two *p's*: 'proficiency' and 'prolificness'. The 'virtue of industry' is therefore about creating the capacity to make use of every minute in a useful way whether it is work or play. If you want to improve your capacity in this regard, you may want to try some of these tips. Firstly, have worthy goals and if needed keep a handy checklist. Compare what you are engaged in, with the goals you have set for yourself. Keep a to-do-list. There are many smartphone applications you can use but importantly access the list regularly. Eliminate distractions. In the modern day, this is key to your proficiency. Know what you do best and work at what makes you prolific. Implement the 48/12 rule, meaning that you focus on what you are doing for 48 min and take a break for 12 min. Plan for the next day before you 'sign off' for the day. This reduces stress and anxiety as you have a plan detailing what to do next. Do not procrastinate. Do tasks with the idea to complete them before you move on to the next, or at least complete what you can, by uni-tasking. Read books or take seminars on success and high-performance habits and virtues. Work on your discipline and tenacity. Finally, engage in constructive recreational activities. When you are not working, pursue activities that you really enjoy and that makes you a better person and advances your chances for success. Find recreational activities that rejuvenate you physically, emotionally, mentally as well as spiritually. The idea is to relax and not squander time by engaging in frivolous activities. This may also include moments of silence and solitude. Busyness is not the endgame of this virtue!

We now come to the third virtue in the list of four influencing virtues. This is the *virtue of imagination* that we would argue is stronger than knowledge. Imagination as a virtue is vital to innovation and growth as two essential elements of progress. What makes this virtue such a beautiful and powerful virtue at the same time is that through the *virtue of imagination* you become a co-creator with nature. It is through mastering the *virtue of imagination* that you would acquire the capacity to open up to new ideas, innovations and solutions, where others cannot see such potentials and opportunities for success and progress. It is through the *virtue of imagination* that you could begin to 'imagine' things that the world has not seen before and literally 'dream' the world into being. Imagination is one of the most powerful cognitive abilities that humans possess. As such imagination is the gateway to a creative, inciteful, joyful and a free life that has the capacity to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary and the natural into the supernatural. The question then is how imagination comes to life. To answer this pertinent question, we have to follow the line of thinking that Aristotle adopted by distinguishing between imagination, knowledge and perceptions. Imagination denotes in this relative context, the process that forms in the mind new images that have not been previously experienced. The image can be for example a likeness of an object, a picture presented, a hypothesis, a conception, or even something abstract and symbolic. The list is infinite as *the virtue of imagination* itself. According to the 'Martian analysis' (May 2019:2), images 'come to life' in three ways. Firstly, images of daily life formed through our sense perceptions. Secondly, images that are formed by the preconditioned life of the human intellect. Here your mindset gives functional content, based on your existential experiences and what at the time is conceptually not expressed. The known knowledge is leading to the unknown cognitively. This expression of an awareness may only be a genesis of a concept. The third is steep in the unknown. Images are formed as part of the non-existential consciousness. This is when someone 'discovers' something new or 'conceptualises' a

new concept or 'finds' a new solution to an existing problem. If you ask the person how did it come about, the person would often reply: 'I don't know'. It just happened. I was working on something else, then out of the blue the idea 'struck me like a bolt of thunder' – getting the point? This is what Cicero called the 'Mind's Eye' or the term he used, 'mentis oculi', during his discussion of the orator's appropriate use of the figure of speech in comparing one thing with another of a different kind. In all three conditions, the process of imagination is not exterior to the power or to the person who is the existential source. Here we have followed the rationality of Thomas Aquinas in *Summatheologiae* 1a.77.5–7 (May 2019:1). The diversity of powers and the acts of imagination argues Aquinas are flowing from within the human soul. Albeit through human cognitivity and senses and should not be considered as something 'outside' the human intellect, nor competing with it, or making human intellect subservient. But rather, it is a vital source of intelligence serving human prosperity through the work of artistic speculation. Seeing the power of imagination this way simply means that acts and thoughts of imagination originates in the depths of the soul, where intellect, imagination and external senses unite in the preconscious life of the human spirit (May 2019:2). Following this line of argument, acts or thoughts of imagination are born of the unconscious, but not the Freudian unconscious of blood and flesh, instinct and complexities, but rather spiritual unconsciousness that originally precedes human rational discourse and conceptual thoughts (May 2019:2). In a way, imagination could be seen as communicating something of a mystery in which each person participates. Imagination could also be viewed as a way to lay bare the predestined provision and prevision through human cognitivity. This state or concurrence between the unconscious and the cognitive facilitates a co-creative potential whereby, through the *virtue of imagination* humans give expression to nature's growing complexities and bring to life what has been predestined. Here humans and nature work in unison or in symmetry to co-create a

future predestined by God – The Author of nature. What is significant here is that humans' unique capacity to 'imagine the unknown' and to bring into life what has not been revealed and experienced before is as powerful a force as any other natural force, be it a geological force or any other force, this earth that we habituated has ever displayed (Sheehan 2016:2). But there is a role for you to play in order to advance the capacity of imagination within yourself. Here are a few ideas to advance your ability:

- Firstly, debunk the idea that you are not imaginative. You are! You are human and that is what makes you uniquely fit to be just that – imaginative.
- Secondly, start with the end in mind. To be imaginative you should try to establish an end vision and know why your vision is so important for this life. Open up to possibilities by having a 'Why not' attitude.
- Follow a cause bigger than yourself. This means that you should be willing to engage in something that extends beyond your immediate needs.
- Be curious. Slow down so that you could become more aware and mindful of all the moments.
- Create stories from lived experiences. This will open up new frontiers of imagination. Here it would be useful to access childhood memories. What you have particularly loved doing and that you were good in. Especially during the period following your third birthday up to your twelfth birthday.
- Keep an idea manual with you at all times. Use your smartphone.
- Surround yourself with people of wide imagination.
- Socialise, socialise and socialise more. Engage the imagination of others and sound the ideas to those you trust.
- Change your environment to stimulate ideas. Travel to see and experience novel things.
- Exercise, do yoga or run a marathon. During exercising and especially in times of fatigue when your cognitive ability is weak and not so much in control of your thoughts, the scope for new ideas is very much alive.

- Finally, be grateful and revere the awe, wonder and beauty of life. And believe us, you will be rewarded with a great imagination because you are ready to become a co-creator and bringing this world to life.

But what purpose would it serve if you have a heightened capacity to be imaginative but your imagination leads to nothing. This brings us to the fourth influencing virtue, the '*power of change*' *or creativity*. Only your creativity will change your world and those of others. Without being creative, human's progress is hardly possible. You may have a great idea of a new novel, but until you sit down and write, edit, listen to critiques and publish your novel, your wonderful idea will not bring you any joy – Right? Until recently the standard idea of creativity was quite narrow. But today the virtue or the human capacity to be creative has much different importance and relevance. Today it is expected of both the executive of a big corporation, as well as the gardener, to be creative in mind. Creativity today is a very big part of self-expression and self-realisation, and as such makes us who we are. Creativity in this broader sense could therefore be seen as an acquired capacity to create something exemplary or original, small and big, through the interplay with the virtue of imagination. Creativity like imagination has a quality of mysticalness having a spiritual undertone that may not be apparent to the senses nor obvious to the human intelligence at the initial stages of creativity. Creativity like imagination arises from your inner soul almost like developing a photo negative or building a puzzle without a picture. As the photo negative develops and as you put the puzzle pieces together, you begin to see the picture unfolding in your mind. Granted, there are many a time a very clear picture that you see or imagine and that guides you in your creativity. Here you could follow a methodological and structured process bringing the picture or image to life. But then there are also many times that you do not see or imagine the outcome but are led by intuition or cognitive analysis, step-by-step to something quite novel and worthwhile. Whichever way, the virtue of creativity takes courage as you would be writing new rules, stimulating the

senses or transforming something in ways never experienced before. This may challenge established patterns of thoughts and the way things are done. Therefore, we believe that creativity is a virtue, as the process of creativity is challenging and simultaneously contributing to human excellence. The virtue of creativity therefore ought to be nurtured.

It is an established fact (Stanley 2001:31) that successful people by being more creative have the ability to discover opportunities that most others are unable to see. They also think differently than the crowd. Creativity as a virtue should therefore become part of your 'make up', that is if you are not born with a 'creative streak'. There are indeed ways that you can improve your own capacity to be more creative. But before we list a few suggestions about how you can master the *virtue of creativity*, we have to pause for a moment to briefly reflect on the underlying motive to being creative. The motive is central to the process of creativity and will be quite influential in the final outcome. Creativity can either be a response to or a reflection of our senses. It can be for instance a love song whose lyrics resonate a very specific feeling and as such is meant to entertain and also incite a similar feeling in the listener. This ought to be distinguished from a creative process, where the person or agent in a more formal context chooses a course of creative action for its own sake and pursues the process of creativity from a fixed disposition of character. Here the aim is to remain true to the process of creation independent from the outcome. In this instance, the motivation is intrinsic to the creative process, whilst in the former, the motivation is extrinsic. Intrinsically motivated creation is understood to be intrinsic to the values relevant to the domain. Thus, self-expression, delight and cultivating understanding are taken to be intrinsic motivators. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, aims at ends or goals that are not themselves part of the values internal to the domain, but rather motivations that could be achieved through performing relevant tasks or kind of activities (Kieran 2014:8). For instance, to write a song with specific lyrics with the aim to make the most money through royalties and to

stay longer on the charts. Intrinsically motivated acts of creativity involve a desire to realise what makes something valuable under the relevant description in the given domain. This means to bring to life the awe, wonder, beauty, intellect and knowledge that are intrinsic to the domain, which can be (1) art, (2) music, (3) architecture, (4) engineering, (5) economics and (6) ethics. In a literary sense, this involves a process to create something that is revealed wisdom that precludes certain demands ranging from price to social gadgets and accolades. Any intrinsically motivated act of creation is therefore free from existential considerations, whilst the extrinsically motivated acts of creation are only a means to realise those ends and values that are external to the domain of artistic values (Kieran 2014:9). Whether an act is informed by intrinsic or extrinsic motivational factors makes a significant difference in the outcome. There are many factors at play but one is that an extrinsically motivated person suffers from divided attention. An alternative explanation is that when the creational act is inspired by intrinsic factors, the person(s) involved is more sensitive to and motivated by the underlying values, precepts and principles of the specific domain internal to the activity in question. The person motivated extrinsically is (1) less likely to take risks, (2) less likely to experiment, (3) will not be keen to seek to understand a deeper level of consciousness and (4) less likely to act with patience, integrity, resilience and courage. This would explain why an extrinsically motivated agent would identify the easiest aimable goals that would most likely lead directly to the desired outcome (Kieran 2014:10). All in all, motivation shape an agent's attentiveness, the envisaging of possibilities and openness to revision of ends, and is fundamental to the novelty and the value of any act of creativity. Real creativity therefore requires a kind of independence from conventionality and freedom from externalities that could drive the outcome towards a particular bias. The exemplary creative agent does not create as a matter of 'chance or fluke but rather out of an ingrained disposition of character' (Kieran 2014:31). Character and motivation therefore play a central function in creativity. Having

the capacity to be curious, temperate and courageous is a sure-fire way to refine your capacity and incite you to become intrigued by the unknown and bring to life the awe, wonder, beauty and wisdom innate to life. This way creativity refreshes the soul and glorifies God.

Let us move on and see what can be done to increase your capacity to be most creative. This is one of those 'golden keys' to life. An inventive-creative mind is getting so much more in times of change. They are most often the disruptors, trendsetters, influencers and game changers today, as there is no room for the humdrum or the mundane. Therefore, you have to consider if you would like to master what many regards as an awe-inspiring and almost a mystical gift – that is to be creative. Here are some ideas as to what you can do to build your creativity: First of all, commit yourself to devoting more time to work on your creativity. Set the right mood and begin doing what you love. It will help if you take a break from the ordinary tasks. Begin to look for sources of inspiration. Here it would be useful to do mindful observations and finding inspiration from your environment and what others are doing. You may also try to do some blue-sky thinking that means daydreaming. So try to create mind maps by asking yourself *but what if?* Seek to use both sides of your brain. If you are more analytical and logical in your way of thinking and doing, then start there. Be willing to take risks. Incorporate design thinking into your creative process. It all starts with empathy and a true fellow feeling for others to establish what they want, desire and their constraints. Then come up with novel and effective solutions to meet these demands. Become more excited and build your confidence by putting together a creative portfolio of blogs, books, actual works that could inspire you and then begin to practice creativity. It can also be useful to keep a journal handy so that you could write down ways to become more creative and ways to express your creativity. Begin to challenge yourself and undertake more difficult assignments. Remember to do something creative is also to learn how to fail and overcome fear and build courage. Do not be shy to ask for advice and feedback. Focus on

eliminating negative thoughts and distractions that may impair your creativity. Finally, it is so important, to have a grateful mind because it is quite cumbersome to be creative if you are not content and at peace with yourself and your environment. These are only a few suggestions to get you going. The key here is to have a strong desire to become a co-creator and bring to life novel and worthwhile ideas and concepts to make life more interesting, proficient prolific, durable and fulfilling. Make this your inspiration rather than to be focussing once again only on yourself.

■ Virtue #7: Fidelity

In a changing world, you would need to be steadfast, dependable, faithful and loyal, in order to endure. Otherwise, you may be overcome by fickleness and inconsistency that would strain your prospect of long-term prosperity. For this reason, we have elected to include the principal *virtue of fidelity* in our list of '7 Prosperity Virtues'. We deem this virtue as absolutely essential in order for you to become, first of all, mindful of the importance of *fidelity* and secondly to gain the capacity to be more steadfast in mind and conduct as the world around you is undergoing changes at a rapid pace. Here the word 'fidelity' denotes the state of being constant, faithful, dependable, loyal, enduring and unchanging. Fidelity is key to your long-term prosperity. If our civilisation continues on the present path of perfidy, corruption, treachery, disloyalty, frivolous self-service, fickleness and inconsistency, the future will be worse than the present that is already at a breaking point in terms of human relations, economic and environmental stability, indecency and the disintegration of society. The way forward in our view is to act with greater *fidelity*. In order to act with fidelity now and in the future, five preluding conditions will have to be met. We use the term 'preluding' as these five conditions are making it possible for the principal virtue of fidelity to be most prolific. These conditions are: *Firstly,* you should act with greater *integrity*, meaning that you have to acknowledge all

that you are, wounds and all. *Secondly,* to act in *good faith* that governs your relationship to truth. *Thirdly,* to conquer change and transition over time by being *loyal. Fourthly,* to live with foresight. You must constitute a moral coherence and conviction so that life itself makes sense to you. *Finally,* to develop a stable centre or inner core through the *power of recollection.* In this discussion on the principal *virtue of fidelity*, we will briefly explain why fidelity ought to be the true basis of your personal identity and offer a few pointers to consider in mastering the *virtue of fidelity*. The discussion will then be followed up with a brief outline of the five conditions that are all preludes to the principal *virtue of fidelity.*

Let us start with the principal *virtue of fidelity.* The *virtue of fidelity* is all about the quality of state of being faithful to who you are. This virtue is about having the capacity to act with constancy, consistency and trustworthiness. This can all be collapsed into one word and that word is '*Sameness'*. The essence here is to master the capacity to take responsibility of a certain past as your own and to recognise your present commitments and duty and to fulfil in future your obligations and to remain the person that people have come to rely upon. Without fidelity, first to yourself, there can be no stability in your humaneness, hence your interconnectedness with the rest of creation, be it other humans, nature in general or a supernatural power, will be unstable, hostile and fragile. With the result that your own prosperity and also those in your circle of influence will be negatively affected and will be very unsure. If you are not true to yourself in which constancy and sameness exists and persists, why would you keep yesterday's promises? Why would you remain loyal and act in good faith? Therefore, we are arguing that fidelity ought to be the basis of your identity today and tomorrow. It is our averment that your dignity and your prosperity reside in fidelity and that fidelity resides in memory or being mindful of the past through recollection. The inverse is that your mind is memory, and memory equates to fidelity or then the degree to which your conduct in future will be trustworthy and free from

falsehood, perfidy and disloyalty. This is why the Eastern philosophy has a proverb that is essentially saying that: 'where your mind is set, that is where you will end'. If your mind is set on being the same and consistent, then you would, without much exertion, act with the required constancy, loyalty and good faith.

We have approached fidelity from such a distant perspective because fidelity is cardinal to your future identity, your humanness and your prosperity. We will even go so far as to say that the *virtue of gratefulness* that we started of this discussion on the '7 Prosperity Virtues' and now the *virtue of fidelity* are like two cornerstones that keep the 'wall of humanness' in your long-term prosperity intact and structurally sound. You may see it this way. The *virtue of gratefulness* is the *power* that fires up the other virtues because the *virtue of gratefulness* is essentially a recollection of all the 'blessings' that you have enjoyed as part of the beatitude of life. Gratefulness is a strong emotion hence has the potentiality to unleash the full potential of the network of other virtues. The other cornerstone is *fidelity.* The *virtue of fidelity* is the source of regularity of all other virtues. *The virtue of fidelity* is on the other hand a recollection of who you are and the structure of your existence that oscillates between your interiority as a person and your connection with the existential world. Let's proceed from here to further contextualise the *virtue of fidelity.* Fidelity is about constancy. It allows you to predict the future through processes, reason, morality, trust in others and loyalty towards others. Because of the virtue of fidelity, the future is then founded on the lived experiences and trust is gained from the past. In this broad sense, fidelity is essentially an expression of gratitude, being the power behind all virtues and an expression of love. You are grateful for what you have come to rely upon and that have sustained you consistently, steadfastly and with loyalty. Hence, you expressed your gratitude by replicating what you have found pleasing and valuable in the past, which is essentially an act of love in the sense that you do the same to others for their own enjoyment. *Secondly,* fidelity is not the opposite of forgetfulness though the essential focus is on memory. Fidelity is

rather the elixir that corrects the frivolous and self-serving, fickleness of disavowal, treachery and inconsistency (Comte-Sponville 2001:21). To correct these vices, fidelity as a virtue focuses on the positive and higher moral standard of consistency, reason, truthfulness and loyalty. For instance, you are truthful and loyal to your word until some more profound truth is revealed. Or remain loyal to your cause until a more worthy affiliation becomes more evident. *Thirdly*, the *virtue of fidelity* is only directed towards worthy causes and objects and only in proportion to their value for humanity. Fidelity is most valuable when the virtue is applied to the most worthy ideas, deeds, principles or affiliations. Having laid out the three underlying principles of fidelity, we can therefore best describe the *virtue of fidelity,* as the human capacity to be faithful to human dignity, values, thoughts, causes, actions, beliefs and duties. In practical terms, fidelity is inter alia about the following: Do what you say; abstain from hypocrisy; be consistent; be true and loyal to those who matter; seek the truth; seek insight; keep your promises and establish self-knowledge.

We will now move to expound the five preluding conditions that increase the prolificness of principal *virtue of fidelity*. *Firstly you have to embrace and incorporate your weaknesses and frailties into the whole of your personality and humanness.* What is at stake here is to act with integrity as an embodiment of your genuine self. This does not mean that the end result would be complete as a well-defined 'self' but rather a growing awareness and appreciation of who you really are – your strengths and weaknesses. It is by the 'light' and the 'shadows' that you would be able to be harmonising the diverse parts of yourself and bring your multiplicity into unison. Here the focus is more on wholeness and integration than on perfection and completeness. To be honest to yourself and others and to live with integrity are fundamental to your prosperity. In the Stanley study (2001:64), 62% of the respondents' rate integrity and honesty as very important for economic success and overall prosperity. It is through the virtue of integrity and honesty that you would develop an ethic that combines caring for others with a sense of

justice and be consistent to the Golden Rule that you should treat others as you would like to be treated. By implication, to remain sensitive to your own strengths and weakness as well as that of all others and treat others with dignity as you wish to preserve your dignity and overcome your own weaknesses and frailties. It is worth reminding yourself that others will not remember how much wealth you have gathered nor would they remember your other successes or failures or what you did or did not do. Your legacy will be informed by your integrity and honesty and how you treated others and how you have made them feel. In the long run, success comes and goes. Therefore, it is better to build your reputation upon integrity and honesty. Here are a few pointers that you either ought to refrain from or diligently pursue in order to build your reputation and legacy:

- Firstly, do not tell lies to mask your insensitivities; intentions and toxic behaviour.
- Do not cross personal and professional boundaries by trying to manipulate others to get what you want.
- Do not go silent if you are not honouring your promises and contractual agreements.
- Do not talk but walk the walk.
- Commit to a life of integrity and honesty.
- Be honest to yourself and incorporate your weaknesses and frailties in your character.
- Practice the ethic of reciprocity.
- Be open to multiple levels of perceived truths. The way you see and experience life is not the only absolute truth.
- Let go of your need to be right all the time.
- Fulfil your promises; honour your word; be slow to speak and do not compromise yourself. If you do speak, speak what is true; be kind and that is what would make a difference.
- If you have messed up, go and fix it.
- Say what you are going to do and then do it.
- Keep appointments and get comfortable with the idea to say no when it is due.
- Do not try to get something for nothing.

- Avoid people who lack integrity and decency.
- Take a self-assessment and continuously review your own growth and how you overcome weaknesses and frailties.

The second condition to be met as a prelude to act with greater fidelity is to bring your words and acts in unison with your inner self. What is required here is *to be in love with truth and to act in good faith.* To act in good faith, you have to have truth as the object in mind. However, it is not implied that good faith is the same as truth. Because you can act in good faith by simply saying and acting according to what you believe to be true, though your way may be wrong. But at least you remain truthful to what you consider to be the truth. In this sense, your love for truth is equal to sincerity, truthfulness or candour, and is the real elixir that corrects hypocrisy, mendacity, duplicity or the state of deceitfulness. In short, it is the opposite of bad faith (Comte-Sponville 2001:196). Good faith, having truth as its object and the elixir of untruths, brings further firmness and stability to your efforts to live a life of fidelity. It is by your good faith that you uphold what has been entrusted to you and to say and do what is right and what must be said and done. It is in this way that you would enjoy enduring results, respect and confidence that hold the key to your ongoing prosperity. But it is sad to observe that the love for truth and to act in good faith have suffered great damage in our modern day. The time has come, we would argue, that we have to reinstate what Aristotle referred to as 'the love for truth' in his Nicomachean Ethics (Aristotle, 'Nicomachean Ethics' *IV*, 7, 1127 913–1127 [ed. McKeon 1941:998–999]). Aristotle refers here to the person who refuses to lie, whether by over statement or understatement, fabrication or omission. Practically speaking, the person who is in love with truth would say what the person understands the truth to be and expresses what is in the person's mind that is void of narcissism, blinded egoism, self-enslavement, hypocrisy, deliberate omission and overstating the reality. In doing just that, you would come to realise that truth does not belong to you, but your inner self belongs to the truth which contains the inner self, transcends it and dissolves it

(Comte-Sponville 2001:198). This then is the grace that comes with good faith and allows you to act with the greatest possible degree of fidelity or constancy.

Thirdly, to enable you to act with fidelity, another condition ought to be upheld all the time. This condition is that we have to embrace each other again and again. Life is about change and transition that could lead to either detachment or can be conquered by faithfulness and loyalty. When two or more people live and work together, they all come with different personalities, values, lived experiences and beliefs. But as life is about growth through constant change, so it can happen over time that people become disengaged or detached from one another. This could lead to people abandoning each other or even deceiving others. This is part of life and the phases of transformation and growth. Yet, this could be a very destructive force in human relations and our interconnectedness and our reliance upon each other. To be able to act with fidelity and to be trustworthy, changes or the forces of transformation how insurmountable it might be perceived, ought to be conquered and endured. This means, we have to deliberately and decisively embrace each other again and again in order to be faithful, reliant and dependable. It is in fact the case that our whole human existence depends upon loyalty. This is true for our interpersonal as well as institutional bonds in the social, political, religious, commercial and recreational domains of human life. What is therefore required is to establish an adherence to the terms agreed upon, shared values, commitments and ideals. This is particularly true and very pertinent in times of stress and transformation. In times of stress and transformation, you have to stand firm with others with whom you have established a shared commitment, despite tension or a lack of decorum, and assume the losses as you would expect the other person to do if the situation is reversed. This preluding condition to fidelity which can be labelled as *'loyalty'* is all about overcoming variability of time and transformation, injuries and the changes of life through the power of commitment to uphold assumed responsibilities. This is indeed not an easy

condition to be met, because loyalty is easy in times of prosperity and under pleasurable and stable conditions. But to embrace one another again and again, when conditions are already tough and taxing is not easy at all. Loyalty as a preluding condition to fidelity is therefore at best very complex and requires resilience and a huge conscience. This is then the time when parties involved have to reaffirm their mutual belonging through stories, symbols, rituals and the renewal of vows. These initiatives are vital to enable the mutual bonds, affections, commitments and shared ideals to be reset in a larger setting that could reveal and reaffirm their togetherness against all odds. This brings us to the *fourth* preluding condition. Many of us find ourselves in a situation where we yearn for some sort of clarity that the world we have inhabited makes sense and to know what each is doing has some meaning in the bigger scheme of arrangements, not only in the present day but also in the future. We truly and sincerely hope that our lives might be part of some larger quest for significance (Whitehead & Whitehead 2016:53). In our discussion of the '7 habits for a changing world', we alluded to the process of prereflective ontological self-understanding, whereby humans quest for understanding of the 'self' transcend the 'self' by focussing on and relating to something or someone bigger than the 'self'. This way humans are essentially future-orientated regarding their own identity and the cause(s) they pursue. What humans yearn for is to have a moral coherence that clarifies their future identity and it is upon this moral coherence that humans also construct their future conduct and develop a spiritual resilience to face the future. How this moral coherence is established is therefore pertinent to human's fidelity. The legitimate question then is: how do we develop the foresight or forethought so that we can be at peace and continue living with the required calm proficiency and fidelity? This preluding condition is pertinent to human's capacity to continue living a life that is characterised by fidelity. Some would argue that only 'faith' is required to construct the required moral coherence and conviction. For much of human's history, many have found

comfort or consolation in religious and spiritual traditions with particular and even differentiated anticipations and forethoughts of the future. Religion and spirituality have been indeed the customary home of faith for many in order to construct their respective moral coherence or foresight. A second way to construct moral coherence is through personal lived experiences. Here, the essence, meaning and purpose of life are informed by individual experiences that are construed to be reliable knowledge and practical wisdom of the unknown and unseen that are external to human's full comprehension. There is also a third way to construct a moral coherence, that is informed by neither religious faith nor individual lived experiences. Recent research (Whitehead & Whitehead 2016:67) has explored the role of spiritual resilience and how it is formed in the military life. Scientists now recognise the vital links between soldier's wellbeing, loyalty and fidelity and their own sustainable vision of life's meaning. Military leaders today recognise that spiritual resilience and a person's moral coherence and ability to adhere to beliefs, principles, values and virtues, that are needed to act with diligence, fidelity and perseverance to accomplish tasks, do not require an explicit religious or spiritual orientation or conviction. In its definition of 'spiritual worldview', the American Air Force study, for instance, now includes personal beliefs and values that individual soldiers derive peace and comfort from as well as a sense of meaning and purpose. The takeaway from this approach is that a personal commitment to a set of values which the person would be willing to risk his or her life for is sufficient to establish commitment and faithfulness to a cause that requires loyalty and fidelity. This may also be prevalent in other associations for instance liberation movements, political parties and commercial corporations. It is our view that with all three of these pathways, the majority of people in whatever congregation should find great strength of resilience if they would construct their respective moral coherence and convictions on two cardinal principles. *Firstly,* that they should *NOT* deny that there are indeed unexplained and incomprehensible events in real life.

Secondly, TO deny that there are inexplicable events that make life unendurable and that divine prevision and provision is a mirage.

Finally, it is our assertion that each person in their individual capacity, or in a collective manner if desired, when constructing a moral coherence and a set of convictions should strive to be objective and apply differentiation by recalling the structure of their individual and/or collective existences, and then most pertinently to recall what the essence of each person's being is. This then is the fifth and final preluding condition to the *virtue of fidelity.* The *power of recollection* is an expression that Romano Guardini (1885–1968), an Italian-German priest constructed (Guardini 1967:16). The expression has been a very familiar part of the religious and ethical discourse at the time, but which, sadly so, is seldom heard of today. Yet, more and more psychiatrists are recognising this innate process in the human psyche that is cardinal to human conduct and pertinent to human's ability to live with the required constancy and commitment to sameness or fidelity in short. To understand this preluding condition to the *virtue of fidelity*, you have to comprehend the essential elements of the structure of the human mind and how the mind function and how the process affects human behaviour in a given context and in a given time. The human mind constantly moves between values, precepts and beliefs and the exterior world of external events, existential objects and other humans – how they live and their conduct. A capable and conscious person, in so far as the person has the power, would survey these intra-movements continuously. You basically go out of yourself to the existential world around you and construct an experience-based principally on your interior values, beliefs, prejudices and principles. This you achieve by unconsciously or even very consciously asking yourself 'what this is all about'; 'wherein does essence consist?'; 'did I act correctly and fairly?' This in and out are happening multiple times. So, what happens outside in the existential world is guided and judged by the inner centre of your 'soul'. The person who is more than less entangled and confused by this process is not a

'collective person'. The uncollected person is more often overcome by the exterior world and the existential realm predominates most powerfully the interior values, precepts, beliefs and virtues of the uncollected person. So, the uncollected person's interior becomes constantly weaker. Ultimately, the uncollected person has no living centre. The existential world is constantly flowing through the person and the uncollected person only reacts to external stimuli and being tossed around with no interior to rely upon. The recollected person, on the other hand, has a very strong interior with very well-defined convictions and as we have alluded to before, an *image of perfection* that is quite well drawn. The collected person refers to his or her judgement of the existential or exterior events and objects for an impartial assessment. This is what we call the *Impartial Referent* or the *Great Judge* that constitutes the human conscience. From our perspective, this interior *image of perfection* is God's way to enable you to understand His wisdom, love and power so that you could be proficient and prolific as co-creators to bring the unknown world to life. The recollecting person is therefore daily and at times, event by event, having the power to recall to mind through contemplation, mediation and prayer, the good guidance of human conscience or then to recall the *image of perfection*. All this is possible as a result of your interior disposition and sensitivity to the constant, gentle and friendly reproof, and warning against faults, omissions and oversight. The recollecting person comes to appreciate and deliberately recall to mind the transcendental wisdom, love and power that the person came to rely upon to give meaning and significance to all events of life and lived experiences.

But this would not be easy because you are in a constant state of distraction. You are always existentially and extrovertedly pulled this way and that way and unless you have a strong interior that is alive and recall the image of perfection constantly, the constant outwardness could lead to an interior emptiness. An interior that is so weak that life and lived experiences become scattered and lead to thoughts that the end will be a 'hopeless

boredom' (Guardini 1967:172) that are interrupted by outbreaks of desperate discontentment. In truth, this can only be avoided to the extent or measure in which you can keep your interior alive by recollection of the *image of perfection* within. It is the only way that you, to some extent, could master the distractions. You have to gather your fidelity and resilience from within yourself. You have to increasingly turn your attention to your conscience which is the *archetype of perfection* or the *vicegerent of the unalterable perfections of God,* the initial cause of human excellence. Then and above all, you must seek the face of God to resolve what is the basic truth of your existence and what you have been called upon to do within your limited comprehension. This is an interlocking process of 'God and You'; 'You before Him'; You through Him – indeed a hearkening to master God's unalterable perfections to which we have given the name, *VIRTUES.* It is only through recalling the *image of perfections* and your efforts to master the virtues that you would be able to relate correctly to the exterior stimuli and to live with fidelity amidst all the existential challenges. This is the only way to secure your long-term prosperity in a changing world.

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Index

The paradigm-shift from modernism to post-modernism and the Fourth Industrial Revolution poses enormous challenges to universal moral codes and human life today. The thesis of this book is that human prosperity in the broad sense of human flourishing in this new environment could be enhanced by re-defining and applying universal moral codes and practicing related habits to guide people to prosper and flourish as dignified human beings. The book represents original and innovative research and explores ways in which moral agents can contribute to lead post-modernist people into an environment where humans can prosper and enjoy life in a changing world where many old moral directives are not feasible anymore. The book is the result of a comparative literary study done from the perspective of universal moral codes which flow from in-created natural law. Recent research results of empirical studies about the effects of the Fourth Industrial Revolution were consulted and applied to raise awareness of the deep-rooted changes and challenges in society today. The subsequent pattern of reasoning and proposals of relevant virtues and habits are those of the authors. The book offers new knowledge and perspectives applicable to the current social-ethical discourse about human prosperity in a changing world. Although written in the fresh narrative style customary to post-modernist scholarship, it is a book for scholars in social ethics and moral opinion-makers in the disciplines dealing with human development.

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This is a very good book, and doubly so. Firstly, the authors manifest their impressive erudition and methodological competencies. They present a subtle inference of which every stage is in the right place, leading the readers from more general contexts to practical applications. They also boldly update classical philosophical (as well as sociological and theological) concepts, showing their ageless validity. Secondly, this book is good because it makes its careful readers better. It shows the reality not as deconstructed but as an ordered process that has meaning and finality. It regards an individual person as an active agent who has real transformative power. It avoids lopsided inspirations by one of the dominant theories and notions that consider reality, whether as a permanent conflict, a random process of events, or an unalterable structure of social entities and roles. For today's scholarly reader, often tired due to the widespread crisis narration, this book is a gift given from the deep knowledge, reflections and experiences of its authors.

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