



How to Live Life Introduction

By Michael J. Lincoln and William Murray

This is a book on how to go about the business of manifesting the Laws of the Cosmos in our everyday lives. When we enter body here in 3-D, we find ourselves up to our eyebrows in survival issues. In struggling with the challenges that this dimension presents us, we tend to lose sight of the fact that we are a soul living in a human body as a part of our soul evolutionary process. This environment is a gigantic “teaching machine” about what it takes to be what it is we are, albeit under severely challenging circumstances.

What we are learning all too often in the “School of Hard Knocks with Evil as the Headmaster” is how to serve our strictly biological needs. We forget altogether that we are all One, and that each of us is a chunk of God expanding the Consciousness of All That Is by coming and expanding our individual soul’s, our collective soul pool’s and the Cosmos’ Consciousness here.

The fact of the matter is that we are to live in the company of others in compassion, understanding and harmony as we manifest the Wisdom of the Cosmos in all we do. The trouble is that in our evolutionary climb up the Consciousness ladder, we have in effect succumbed to the rather overwhelming challenges of 3-D, and we therefore have a pretty unclear concept of what it is we are supposed to be doing in our sojourns here.

All of us are born with the genetic resources generated by eons of individual and collective experiential learning in the evolutionary process. We are not born as a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate upon which life writes.

We come in with our individual and collective soul wisdom, the Laws of the Cosmos and our genetic heritage to work with as the raw materials out of which we become human as we commence our learning experiences here.

However, in order to pull that off, we have to put it all together as a match to what the world, the human collective consciousness and our culture are doing as a function of all that has gone down before.

It takes about 28 years of ecology-taught mentoring to begin to function as adult members of society because of the tremendous complexity of human consciousness and that of the environment around us.

En route, we are in effect incomplete biologic organisms learning the ropes of coping via our experiences along the way. Also, because we started this process by entering the bodies of some form of primate and moving from there, we have been pretty thoroughly up to our eyebrows in the primitivity of our collective learning curve and in the massively challenging circumstances that result from that interaction process.

Collectively, our soul pool has generated a lot of cumulative wisdom in this process, but it has also generated a history that is pretty grim in its nature, in its biologic impact on both our genetically transmitted information and on our collective consciousness as manifested in all the world's cultures.

Given the harshness of the learning environments here and the resulting cultures, we have a collective consciousness that is rather intensely fear-dominated, along with fear's spin-offs such as anger, envy, despair, guilt and selfishness.

However, we have now reached the point in our cumulative collective consciousness evolution that the lessons here are going to shift from fear to love as the primary motivator and learning experience-generator. We have wrung the fear rag dry as our teacher, and we are now "graduating" to the "School of Loving Commitment."

This doesn't mean that we will all live in paradise lying around eating grapes. It means that survival is not going to be the prime driver of our lives, and that instead, living out the Cosmic Laws in all we do is going to be the bottom line requirement and learning process. Neither the planet nor our souls can continue with us living from hand to mouth in completely isolated individualistic pursuit of advantage any more. We have in effect "come of age" as a soul pool collective consciousness, and the lessons are going to shift now to the process of the manifestation of the Nature of the Cosmos here on Earth.

For this reason, our most basic need at this point is mentoring in how to go about the business of living Cosmically in everything we do here on planet. This book is one piece of the action in achieving that outcome.

It did not start out with that in mind. The fact of the matter is that at the time the book was originally written, both authors were functional atheists and materialists trying to share what we had learned with others in our field of endeavor, which were child and youth care and treatment.

Accordingly, Lincoln, who was the clinical psychologist Clinical Director of a treatment center for emotionally disturbed children, and Murray, who was the Child Therapy Supervisor of the agency after being a child therapist on the line for some 20 years collaborated to create a manual for professional child care therapists.

The process of doing so consisted of Lincoln's recording from the sidelines what actually occurred in the moment-to-moment processes of living that took place in the agency.

He focused on each of the 35 child therapists as a part of the data pool to get as complete a cross-section as he could get of what really happens in the process, in terms of what the child therapists actually did with the children.

He then applied systematic scientific analytic methods to the data (see *Actions Speak* by Michael J. Lincoln), with the result that he found nine broad capability clusters or response class components of both successful and detrimental child therapist functioning. He also found a set of rather narrow band skills that rounded out the picture of what child therapists do when working with children.

At that point, Murray delved into his soul (we now know), his life history wisdom, his genetically generated natural abilities, and his huge amount of on line experience as a child care therapist to "flesh out" the bare bones competence clusters and skills that Lincoln found.

The result was a book entitled, *So You Want To Work With Kids?* It speaks directly to the experiences and requirements of child care therapists working on line with emotionally disturbed or in other ways damaged kids in cooperation with members of many other professions in the collective goals of the agencies involved.

It was only some thirty years later that Lincoln discovered upon rereading their work that they had scientifically discovered the basic components of Walking the Walk, of living the Nature of the Cosmos here in 3-D. So Lincoln has taken on the task of making what was found available to us all in this book as guidelines of how to be truly human beings.

Perforce, this has led to a text that is highly focused on child caring. However, as was said, the undertaking resulted in a far more encompassing and in-depth set of findings about what is required to live life successfully on both the pragmatic level and at the same time on the Cosmic, integrative, heart-centered level of human functioning.

The very detailed specificity of the material is highly conducive to your learning the fundamental factors in how to Walk the Walk in everyday life. The information has a way of settling into your “back burner” to serve as an on-the-hoof guide to living. You do not and should not try to remember all the parameters used to give you that internal guide. Just read and absorb in short segments, with assimilation time in between.

The best way to approach this is to realize that child care therapy takes you to the deepest roots of who we are and what we need, so that by delineating what is required for effective child care, you also describe what is the very foundation of committed and cosmically correct human functioning. The same implications, ramifications, ecological and psychological considerations hold in everyday living as they do in child-rearing.

So bear with us as we plunge the depths of human functioning and the human condition in the form of the world of child therapy as metaphor for all of life and as a guided tour of enlightened living.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

In order to generate the mind-set that allows one to “get” what the findings of this research process was and how they relate to our lives, we are going to do a bit of description of the child care therapy world as a representative of the complexities and conundrums that life presents us all.

From there, we will move on to the introduction of the capability clusters as life guidelines for us. Finally, we will take on each of the nine capability clusters individually and the narrow band skills that are involved in being a fully human being as individual chapters. Hopefully, at the end of all this, you will have a better idea of what living the Nature of the Cosmos looks like.

Starting with child care therapy as an example of the challenges that life presents us, we will describe the circumstances a child care therapist encounters when they enter the field. Child care therapists come to the field from very different backgrounds and educational training levels.

The latter range from uncompleted grammar school to the advanced degree level. Those who do have formal training have typically gotten it in one of a considerable range of fields other than child care therapy.

All of the child care therapists tend to bring with them a desire to help children and their own ideas about child-rearing and handling. The ideas they bring with them come from their own childhood or from their reactions to their childhood.

This being the case, they characteristically develop in their functioning and beliefs about child-caring according to the nature of the situation in which they work, and in which they learn their basic approach to child caring. Most of this development and learning is pretty much by the seat of their pants as they confront day-to-day situations more or less on their own.

Having looked at the characteristics of the field they will encounter as a child care therapist, the next step is examine the nature of the people they will be working with, which is basically two groups -- the children and their fellow adults.

Taking the children first, the therapists find that each day they are required to care for kids who act like monsters and look like cherubs. Then there are the children who look like monsters and function like angels.

Some 12-year-old boys would love to be rocked to sleep. Then there is the 14-year-old who knows personally all aspects of the street scene. There are the 10-year-old girls who know and use all the seductive behaviors known to man. The children make their first efforts at sharing by offering you a dirty, sticky piece of candy or a joint.

You get children with varying degrees of mental and physical handicaps, and you get children of different ethnic groups, sub-cultures, cultures and economic backgrounds. You learn to know and care for children with life histories ranging from total permissiveness to absolutely cruel, assaultive and inhumane treatment.

You will work with children who have lost their parents, with children who have little idea of who their parents were, and with children who have loving parents. Children will arrive angry and nasty, quiet and withdrawn, phony and empty, scared and hopeful, or scared and aggressive.

Some will be crying, some blobby and couldn't care less, some are all over the place and some are happy to be out from under all the heavy emotional pressures of a disruptive home. Some will be drugged to a stupor, and some will be totally tuned into their very own worlds. These are the children you face daily.

Most people expect children to behave within the limits of the range of behaviors that the majority of children put out. You have the problem of having to maintain some sort of clear and realistic view of what is normal while dealing with abnormal behavior daily.

It can get you to the point where you come to think of quite abnormal actions and events as being normal, as what you can expect from any kid. On the other hand, you also have a problem with beginning to expect the children you work with to constantly put out severely abnormal behavior. This latter expectation is many times promoted by the series of mental health "war stories" involving colorfully weird behavior. These war stories concern the bizarre actions of certain children over the years that have been embroidered, exaggerated, used and finally "enshrined" to lay out a pat story of "sickness" that somehow has now become something that you can expect to happen with each and every child with whom you come into contact.

You will indeed bump into these sorts of dramatic events from time to time. However, the vast majority of your time is spent attending to the daily needs of the children in your care. George and Alan are trying to build a fort, but they can't decide who gets the hammer first.

Ann wants to plan her birthday party. Mike still plays under the table most of the morning. Betsy's bike needs fixing. Kitty won't change her napkin. Ed hates school and he also stalls, stalls and stalls cleaning up his room.

Bill needs some lap-sitting and holding time. Jimmie still insists on wearing the same underclothes all week. Scott is dying to tell you about swimming the full length of the swimming pool. The kids won't stop running in the halls.

Plus the group has just changed your name from Murray to "manure-y" and your co-worker's name from Carol to "barrel." These kids are like all kids, only their behavior is further up or down the scale of its intensity, the number of times it happens, the amount of time that they do any one thing, or the appropriateness of what they do in the situation at hand.

As for your co-workers, you will become involved with people in many roles and fields -- teachers, social workers, psychiatrists, physicians, public health nurses, welfare workers, psychologists, secretaries, corrections officers, physical therapists, police, plant maintenance and custodial workers, administrators, cooks, parents and relatives of children, and your fellow child care therapists.

Each has their very own belief system, their own attitudes, their own values, their own personality, and their own competences and resources, as well as their own limitations and needs. You are required to work with these people as part of your job.

Within a given 10 minute period on any given day, you can be involved in a high-level treatment-planning session around, "Should Keith be allowed to see his father?"; a disagreement with a fellow child care therapist over whether or not Carrie should be allowed to play in the bathtub; a reply to the Director about why Johnny is out in the hall instead of the classroom; a compliment from a teacher for helping Sam to get excited about his math; and a rather heated request from the housekeeper to stop the children from using the wash cloths for polishing their shoes. This goes on day in and day out.

These little episodes can be inflated to full-fledged wars between the various fields of work represented on the staff or to heavy negotiation sessions. The problems can be solved, shoved under the rug or made worse.

The support of your fellow staff can be 100 percent, or the grapevine can wipe out the excellent work you've done the past week. Child care therapy involves just as much dealing with adults as it does working with children, and both are crucial to the successful carrying out of your functions.

In addition to working with the adults and children who are directly connected to the setting in which you are working; your position will carry you into many other aspects of the child's situation, placement and role in society.

You will find yourself in the halls of justice and concerned with the legal aspects of care for children, many times fair, many times unjust. The environment is not always set up to support and advance what you teach and train the child daily.

There are limited facilities for children, and many times a child in whom you have invested deeply will be removed to a correctional facility, a destructive home, or a state mental hospital.

You will be called upon to sit with a child and tell them that they are being removed from their family for their own best interests. You will have the privilege of showing parents that their child is mentally capable, and that they can have hope for their child's future adjustment.

You will have to walk in and say to a mother that her time is up and that her child must return to his cottage or unit. You will watch with excitement when a child returns to the community and makes an adjustment at home, in school and in the neighborhood.

Children under agency care are frequently required to face an environment that many times does not have sufficient resources for them. A diet that is highly loaded with starch and carbohydrates and low on protein and other necessities is not unusual.

A limited fund for proper clothing is very common, and at times, the same dress code is required for all. Arbitrary rules have been established by people who are distantly removed from the children or which were set up to meet a situation that has long since disappeared.

Each day the child lives and learns with and about you, and you ask yourself, "Is it worth it? What right do I have to place my values on this child? What right do I have to train children for a future which I can't predict and in which there is much that I have never experienced? With my limited background and short life experience, what tells me I can provide the right experiences and relationships for all these different children with their vastly different backgrounds, numerous problems, and complicated behaviors?"

These questions are irritating, demanding and evaluative. They are also of great value, and they must be a continuous part of an effective child care therapist's response to their job. For they force you to look at what you're doing, to evaluate how well you are doing it, and to decide whether you should continue child caring.

If the answers keep coming up positive and goal-oriented, rather than negative or strongly ambivalent, then you are probably providing valuable experiences for the children which more than compensate for the discomfort that these questions induce in you.

Those who assume responsibility for the care of children are not only taking on the care of their needs while in your responsibility, but you are also taking on the job of providing experiences that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

This fact is perhaps the very foundation of the child caring profession. It is a truism that children learn from what they experience. However, there is a profound and basic implication involved in this truism.

That implication is that what the child experiences is irreversible. That is, every single intervention, effort, event, communication, situation, setting, feeling, person and other phenomenon that the child experiences leaves an irrevocable change of who the child is and who they will be.

Each experience is unique and unreproducible. Human interactions and experiences cannot be erased, struck from the ledger or hidden from their learning experiences. An event, an experience, an interaction with someone has occurred in a specific time, place and situation, and it can never be retracted or rerun.

It may be a portion of the excellence of life or it may be degrading and despicable. The experience may be a lengthy complicated interaction or it may be a simple stubbing of their toe. However, it has occurred, and that is irreversible.

This does not mean, however, that the effects of the experience cannot be changed. Even an experience that most people would agree was disastrous for a child can be worked with so as to provide new experiences that interact with the “disastrous” experience to provide a useful, growth-producing and consciousness-expanding overall effect.

There is no room for the “blame-frame” in child care and in life. If something has happened which is felt to have resulted in a bad learning experience for the child, this event-experience can be built on, instead of serving as the jumping-off point for a blame-throwing or a chest-pounding guilt-grabbing. The fact is that an event has happened, and it is your job to do something about it, rather than feeling bad or trying to avoid feeling bad.

For instance, a fairly common bad scene that occurs might be something like this. The children are in bed, and you have gone from bed to bed, talking to each child about the day, tucking them in, kissing them goodnight, after which you have turned out the lights.

Then there is a giggle from the bedroom and one of the boys yells, “Stop throwing those pillows! I’m trying to sleep!” You get up, walk to the door and tell the kid who is throwing the pillows to get back in bed in no uncertain terms.

The kid says, “Shut up!” You grab him, take him in the hall, and say, “Stand there until you’re ready to go to sleep!” The kid kicks the wall. You reply, “Okay, if you’re going to kick the wall, you can clean it.”

The kid slops water all over the wall and the floor. You get angry and yell at the kid, and the battle is on until in total frustration, you put the kid to bed and tell him he will go to bed an hour earlier the next night.

The result is a huge flap the next night because you forgot that that was your day off and you weren’t there that night. Another worker has to deal with the results of the preceding night’s events.

This sets up a relational issue between you and the other worker which has to be hassled out around the requirements of work with the kids on the first night you return to duty with all the ecological ripple effects that generates.

The tension that this produces results in a heavy night for all, and the child who was the central figure in the whole scene becomes increasingly upset by all the events and outcomes of his behavior.

Now this situation is ripe for all sorts of blame-related behavior on the part of the child and both workers. However, a far better way to handle this situation is to problem-solve around the events.

For instance, you or the other worker could suggest in a problem-solving conference among you, the second worker and the child so that the same situation might be better handled next time by having you quietly pull your chair to the door and sit there while the kids settle.

Or you might ask the child what's up and what you can do to help him. Or you might suggest that if the child isn't sleepy, he can take a coloring book into the dayroom and color for a while.

Or you might plan the situation for bedtime for that evening, working out a routine of what's expected, and negotiating a contract with the child. Or the child might be asked, "Given the situation at the time, how might we have done that better?"

Or the situation could be replayed with the child, putting in a new ending, a bit of your wisdom, and a pleasant capper to the whole thing for the child. Or the experience could be examined with regard to "what you learned from all of that."

The point is that while experiences are irreversible, they are also the very basis of the child caring process. For in essence child caring is a part of the knowledge and learning industry, and, as such, it deals with irreversible experiences as its "product."

It is with this basic fact in mind that the effective child care therapist operates. For if this approach to child care is used, it can be seen that wrongs can be righted, mistakes can be learned from, failures can be little successes, and your interactions with the child can be reenacted so both of you can expand your consciousness and coping/creating capabilities.

The child is freed to develop hopes based on skills that allow them to gain the things that keep their bucket of life filled, and you are freed to learn from every event and to move closer to the point where you provide the child something of learning and modeling value with all you do.

Both you and the child can enjoy the awareness that each moment's learning experience has created an increase in your intellectual, emotional, behavioral, psychological fund of knowledge, skill and consciousness from which your next experience comes.

THOUGHTFUL LIVING

The other implication of the irreversibility of the child's experience for the child care therapist is that their first response to every situation they encounter in child care should be a *moment of thought*.

For while you should never be what you are not when you are doing child care or life, you should also generally avoid just doing the first thing that comes to mind on the basis of your immediate gut reaction to a situation.

You do not just simply "do your thing." Effective child care and life-living is *thoughtful* child care and living. Thoughtful child care and living can be viewed as being composed of two basic components:

- 1) Awareness of what is needed by the child and all affected at any given moment.
- 2) Utilization of the resources available to meet the needs of all involved, once they are figured on the fly.

These two components each involve a number of aspects. With regard to the awareness component, the key concept is that of the *ecology* of child care -- the sum total of all the interacting factors involved in child caring situations and their impacts upon the kid's experience.

Ecological awareness in child care and in life essentially involves knowing and keeping in mind the totality of the situational requirements and the child's needs as you consider your next move.

Children (and all of us) need a committed and sensible environment, a functional culture where one can count on people to be concerned about each other's welfare, and in which they/we are expected to care about their/our effects on others.

A person should be an individual who is valued and considered as a resource of the system of which they are a part and in which they are learning. The values displayed should be of such a nature that they provide a workable framework for a humane environment.

The great fundamental task of humanity is that of *learning*. We need as many and as varied learning experiences as we can accept and use. This is our "work" here. And an integral part of this "work" is that we have fun. All people need and seek enjoyment as a basic biological necessity.

Eric Berne said that if you are not stroked, your spinal cord will shrivel up, referring to a study in which rats were deprived of strokes. It actually happened. Life ain't any fun if there ain't any fun -- and we don't stay.

The basic role of human strokes and fun is the establishing of basic trust and hope. One of the major effects of pleasure is that of counter-acting and preventing the development of fear. It allows us to develop a sense of safety.

It also develops positive feelings towards people, themselves and life. Research has clearly demonstrated that around 85% of events are positive, even for emotionally disturbed children.

Positive experiences keep us going during the tasks of learning and living despite the occasional setbacks and rebuffs from the environment. It acts as a buffer, a motivator and a restorer in the business of getting along with the risks, pitfalls and disappointments of the world. It makes the "strike out" tolerable because of the fun of being in the game.

Swinging with the bat at the moving target, the excitement of maybe being able to smack that home run, having all eyes on you while you are trying, and knowing that you'll get another turn at the whole bag of goodies in a while.

Equally important is the fact that the skills and habits learned by the route of positive experiences are the most durable and effective in the business of living. It's no accident that people talk about how having fun "turns you on."

When that happens, you learn on all kinds of levels from the experiences you have. You pick up at a deep and detailed level what's going on in the situation. And that in turn leads to your having new responses available in all kinds of similar and related situations, since it worked so well in this one.

It also leads to our developing new variations on old skills and habits, since we then feel confident to try out new ideas and skills along with the old. All of this makes for more varied, supple, subtle and flexible ways of doing things.

When you get paid off for tackling a problem situation in a given way, it turns you on, and you start thinking in terms of trying out that idea in other situations. When, for instance, we learn to make a cushion shot in pool, we are apt to try the basic ideas involved in other areas like making basketball shots, and even figuring out why people react to some situations the way they do.

By way of contrast, learning that results from punishment, from escaping from painful situations, or from the successful avoidance of unpleasant experiences tends strongly to be highly specific, concrete, rigid, unchanging and fear-based.

Responses learned in this way are very hard to alter or replace with new experiences because the “emergency response” (freeze, flee or fight) get associated with highly unpleasant experiences. They also tend to generate a good deal of resentment and the resulting “get-back” behaviors.

The consequent reactions and results tend to be simpler and more compelling than those arising from pleasant experiences. In addition, when learning takes place in situations where negative experiences accompany it, an avoidance pattern develops in which you become more concerned with not repeated the bad experience than you are in trying and risking new responses the next time a similar situation comes up.

For instance, when you volunteer an answer or a solution to a problem and you get a negative response, you not only don’t learn what a good strategy would be like, but you also learn that volunteering leads to humiliation.

In addition, the “side effect” reactions like resentment, fear and bad models of how to handle problem situations by those who punished you hamper learning. They also tend to generate other negative experiences, and a chain reaction sequence starts up.

In short, the good life is the best life for us all. However, this doesn’t mean that we should never experience unpleasant events. These are part and parcel of life, and they teach essential lessons.

They have their role in our life and learning. For instance, there are those areas where specific and inflexible learnings are needed, such as safety procedures and fundamental no-no’s like harming others.

It is clear though, that the gain/pain ratio has to be in the right ballpark or we will find it hard to go forth and take on the world. With too many goodies and privileges, you get the spoiled person. With too many blows and disappointments, you get a scared and/or nasty person. You need to keep this ratio as close to optimal as you can.

UNIQUE NEEDS

Having discussed the general needs people have, we now come to the other major set of needs that we all have. In addition to the universal needs, you also have to tailor your moves to meet the individual needs of each person we encounter or affect.

A whole range of special needs arises from the particular nature of any given person’s life history, current circumstances and personal characteristics such as their genetic structure and the nature of their soul.

Each individual is different in a number of ways. Thus they bring with them a set of physical and temperamental characteristics such as their general body build and the ease with which they can be made angry -- their degree of irritability.

They have a set of beliefs, attitudes, values and feelings towards things arising from their soul nature, destiny design and life experiences. The internal dynamics of these factors play an important role in their functioning. So do their skills, knowledge and limitations.

Their family of origin, the other significant people in their life, and the culture and sub-culture of which they are a part also have a profound influence upon where things are at for them. In short, what is the person’s situation and what are the needs that arise from this situation?

Basically, what is required of a fully human being is the ability to engage with life and situations in this manner. It has been found that this process can be understood by examining the 10 components of our functioning that are the topic of this book.

THE CAPABILITY CLUSTERS

You will recall that the basis of this book was a systematic observational and scientific analysis of the functioning of 35 child care therapists in a treatment agency for emotionally disturbed children.

What we will now focus on are the underlying capability clusters found to make up what these individuals did with the children as they carried out their child care therapy processes.

Although the data occurred in this form and setting, we are not interested in outlining the competences of child care therapists here. That is focused on in *So You Want To Work With Kids?*

What we are interested in here is the fact that effective child care therapy is actually a specialized subset of the underlying factors of what is called “Walking the Walk” -- living in a Cosmically effective manner.

What follows then is a spell-out of the nine capability clusters and the “bag of skills” that underlie “Coming From The Heart,” which is where we now have to move to doing as a collective soul pool (as a species).

All of these clusters can be and are learned and cultivated, though some are probably more difficult to acquire and build up than others. Where you stand on each of these 10 components of Walking the Walk tells you how well you are doing in each area. A careful look at where you are in these components will provide you with a “profile” of your effectance as a human being, so to speak.

The remainder of this book consists of an explanation and exemplification of each of the 10 components of the Walk in some detail. While it is true that many of the details and examples come from working with kids, it needs to be known that these are *universal competences*. We ask your assistance in translating from the child-centered details to the process of living life in all aspects and contexts for yourself. We commence with a brief overview of the 10 components of Coming From The Heart.