The ABCD's of Community Building: Avoiding
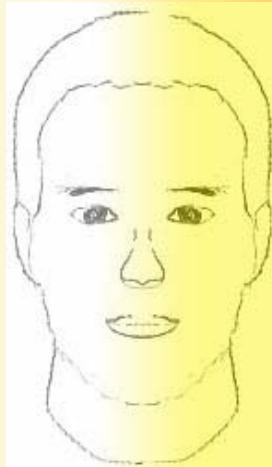
SCHIZOPHRENIC CHARACTER

lighter side is right sounding theory

darker side is corrupt practices

DEVELOPMENT
reflections of one's self

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THE ABCDS OF COMMUNITY BUILDING: AVOIDING SCHIZOPHRENIC CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

By

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Part of the "Little Book" Series

THE ABCDS OF COMMUNITY BUILDING: AVOIDING SCHIZOPHRENIC CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Inclusive Community Building Character versus Schizophrenic Community Building Character

When individuals engage in inclusive community building, inclusive ideals trump exclusive ones. Inclusivity is demonstrated by the individual's positive **A**ttitude, **B**ehavior, **C**ommunication, and **D**iscipline (ABCDs). When individuals demonstrate the aforementioned ABCDs in their lives in both theory and practice, it gives rise to Inclusive Community Building Character which is based on the values of caring, sharing, loving, trust, honor, and respect.

These same values, however, are articulated by many who do not practice what they preach. Consequently, individuals who pay only lip service to foregoing values manifest what this book refers to as 'discommunity' building character known as Schizophrenic Community Building Character due to the disconnect between what they say and the life they live. Individuals manifesting Schizophrenic Community Building Character pay lip service to values such as caring, sharing, loving, trust, honor and respect but what is practiced is contrary. Inequity, confusion, enmity, division, and deceit are hallmarks of Schizophrenic Community Building

Character. Consequently, negative and destructive **A**ttitudes, **B**ehaviors, **C**ommunication and **D**iscipline are the end result.

To be clear, this book does not hypothesize that one who exhibits Schizophrenic Community Building Character necessarily suffers from schizophrenia in the clinical sense. Rather, it aptly describes a situation where one's actions contradict one's stated beliefs.

The term 'Community Building', as used in this Little Book, describes efforts to shape and mold the social environment in which people live. Community building is guided by societal or `group conscience' which refers to the collective values and rules of a society apart from the values of rules of any one individual. We refer to the influence of group conscience on Community building as 'relationship building modalities'; or, put another way, a tendency to conform to a general pattern of common thinking leading to conforming attitudes, behavior, communication and sense of discipline. Relationship building modalities are defined as meta-values: division or unity.

The term 'meta-value' describes a root or fundamental value that dictates a person's other (normative) values and consequently, molds their attitude, behavior, communication, and discipline. These meta-values can be based upon ethics, religious teachings, or notions of morality. When nations or people build relationships using the meta-value of Division, one can expect to find an ever present hostile environment. There is a desire to conquer people labeled as 'others' and more often than not these 'others' are marginalized. This we call a 'downward spiral' relationship building modality which is necessarily characterized by seduction or bewitchment; domination or power; occupation or invasion; overthrow or destruction; and ultimately leads to subjugation or servitude.

It is apparent that divisive relationships are built on an unstable foundation. At first glance the relationships may appear solid but upon closer inspection, one will see that the relationships established are on shaky ground. In time, divisive relationships begin to show signs of wear and tear and ultimately break down. On the other hand, when nations or people build relationships using the meta-value of Unity, a friendly environment is always present and the builders make an earnest attempt to coexist with

the 'others' as co-equals. We refer to this as an 'upward spiral' relationship. This upward spiral relationship building modality follows the path of consent or agreement; concord or peace; harmony or compatibility; and understanding or comprehension. Founded upon the meta-value of Unity, this type of relationship is stable, solid, and can withstand destructive forces, proving sustainable over time.
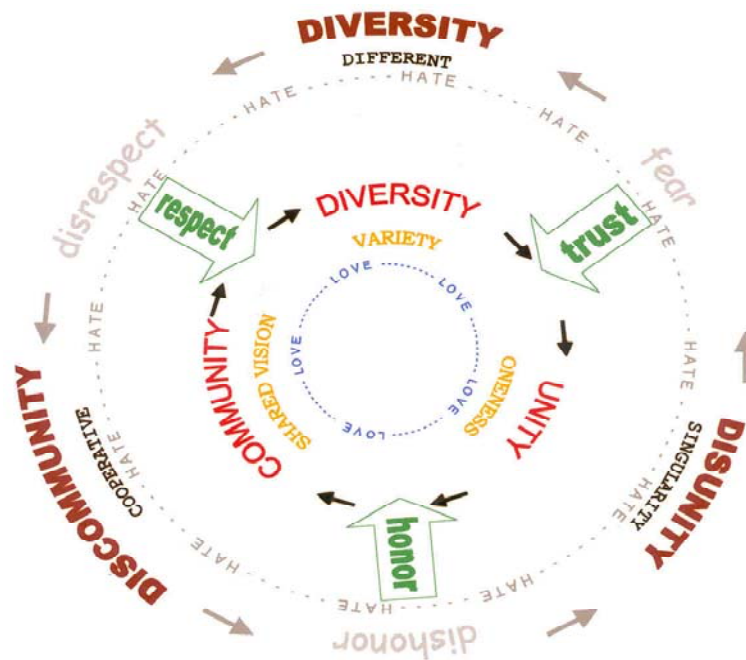
One way to better illustrate this process is The Ellison Model Inclusive Community Building Diagram (also called The Ellison Model Circular Diagram). The Ellison Model incorporates ethically and morally based values as its central components toward the end of joining people together from different cultures and social dispositions (Hunt 2002; Rice 2004, 2005). The Model, which incorporates ethics and values based upon Judeo-Christian principals, proposes that the idea of 'conscience mandates' (which can be categorized as socialized, intrinsic/innate, or universal consciences) impact the kind of community building that occurs within any given society, group of people, or system.

Note that in Figure 1, the starting point for the outward as well as the inward circles is diversity. When diversity is

defined as variety, it is a neutral concept sometimes called the 'spice of life.' However, when diversity is seen as 'different,' meaning people are 'less than', they become marginalized and a downward spiral of division or discommunity building occurs.

Figure 1

BUILDING THE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY
The Discommunity, Definitions, Motivations and Values of Each

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The diagram consists of two circles, one outward (counterclockwise flowing) and one inward (clockwise flowing).

Analyzing the movement in the outward circle of the diagram:

Diversity, if motivated by hate, yields a negative-value of disrespect. As the relationship develops under this value system, it leads to discommunity and is motivated by hatred. Although outwardly people seem to love, their true motivation, manifested by their behavior, is hatred. Eventually this relationship will yield the second negative-value, dishonor which leads to disunity and promotes fear.

Analyzing the movement in the inward circle of the diagram:

Diversity, if motivated by love yields a positive-value of trust, and fosters unity. As the relationship grows under the motivation of love, a second value of honor will

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manifest which leads to true fellowship/community yielding a third value of respect.

Conscience Collective

This writing explores the nature of Schizophrenic Community Building Character. The paradox is that while the character preaches community building, in theory, his practices tends to suggest discommunity. This is very similar to a person suffering from clinical schizophrenia whose rational thought process is disrupted and his delusional thinking causes a 'split' between rational thought and actions. The individual evidencing Schizophrenic Community Building Character realizes the duality of his personality but is trapped in what French sociologist Emile Durkheim calls the 'conscience collective.'

The conscience collective refers to the common norms, values, ideas, and beliefs shared by members of a community. These shape the structure and direction of community life. Therefore, the conscience collective goes beyond the personal interactions of one or two individuals and encompasses the shared norms, values, ideas, and beliefs of an entire community.

Durkheim viewed society as an entity made up of individuals that formed it, but having a life apart from those individuals. The individuals have a 'shared awareness' and are socialized into roles and mannerisms (behaviors) that are fitting to the society. To Durkheim, society was seen as a 'thing' in itself, and it was this 'thing' that needed to be understood. He called for the study of the society because the beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, rituals, and imagery that make up culture and morality exist not just in the minds of individuals, but as a 'collective conscience,' independent of them (Hunt & Rice, 2006).

The society referenced above consists of interdependent institutions, including, but not limited to the family, education, government, religion, and legal system. For Durkheim, social cohesion, solidarity, and collective actions arise out of shared beliefs and values yielding the content of the conscience collective. Stated another way, society's members are socialized or trained into the conscience collective.

Figure 2

Deluded Conscience Collective

A clinical definition of a schizophrenic is one who suffers from a severe mental disorder characterized by impairment in thought process and behaviors. Because there is often little or no logical relationship between the thoughts and feelings of a person with schizophrenia, it has often been called 'split personality' disorder. Symptoms include disturbances of thought or perceptions, problems with attention, difficulty with communication, difficultly with establishing and maintaining relationships with others, and some memory disturbances which interfere with one's ability to plan and organize.

In this book, a person exhibits 'schizophrenic' characteristics when he or she suffers from a deluded conscience collective or a fixed, false belief system that is resistant to reason or factual disproof. The origin of the word 'schizo' goes back to ancient Greek meaning 'a splitting of the mind.' Similar words 'schism' and 'schizoid' mean division. Within this context, the individual exhibiting schizophrenic characteristics possesses conflicting (divisive) attitudes, behaviors, and communication.

Schizophrenic Character, as defined in this book, denotes attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that appear to be based on a set of positive values (caring, sharing, loving, trust, honor and respect) that lead a person to say one thing in theory, but to consistently practice behaviors contrary to the stated theory. Again, to be clear, this book does not posit that a person who exhibits Schizophrenic Community Building Character traits necessarily suffers from schizophrenia in the clinical sense. Rather, their actions contradict their stated beliefs.

The Darker and Lighter Sides of Schizo's Character

Figure 3

Theory is the Lighter Side

Duality is at the heart of persons manifesting Schizophrenic Community Building Character. Right sounding theory exemplifies the lighter side of Schizo's character while destructive practices exemplify the darker side. The prevalance of this phenomanon can be explained, in part, as a result of socialigist theorists enabling, excusing, and justifying schizophrenic community building.

Functionalist theories, for example, are useful in maintaining the status quo in society. **Functionalism** is considered the oldest, and still the dominant, theoretical

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perspective amongst those in sociology and other social sciences who seek to examine the nature of community building. The theories espoused by functionalists are couched in moral tones, but they lead to discommunity in practice. In actuality, little, if any, attention is paid to conflict. The role of change (seeing it as being an essential element of social life) is underestimated, and the relationship between individuals and their impact on a social system is simplified.

Division benefits the 'haves' because of their position of privilege; and the 'have nots' desire what the 'haves' have. Functionalist theorists do not seek oneness or unity. Instead they adopt the view that diversity is both a starting and ending point. Inevitably, some groups will be marginalized. By justifying existing posts of status: rich, moderate, and poor, they help to maintain the existing order making use of an exclusive meta-value in the process.

For example, let us examine the preamble of the United States Declaration of Independence:

> *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain*

unalienable Rights, that among these are
Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

During his time, Thomas Jefferson, the writer, intended to express the general beliefs of our nation's government and that of the American people. The belief system of the American people at the time was influenced by Christian principles, as well as classical and modern schools of thought.

Practice is the Darker Side

The darker side of Schizo's theory is made known by day to day practices where great sounding morally toned words are not realized in practice. Again, using the example of the preamble of the Declaration of Independence, not all men, or women, were equal in practice. For example, for the purposes of representation, the United States Constitution, adopted just a few years later, dictated that "those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians" (generally, black slaves) were seen as 3/5 of a person. Futher, blacks could not vote and were viewed as less than equal to whites. The United States Supreme Court aptly summed up a prevalant attitude of society pre-Civil War in the *Dred Scott* case which ruled that Black persons:

as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations, and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect.

Additionally, women continued to be oppressed (unable to vote and not seen as man's equal) and the poor were marginalized. What are the guiding principles that led to these practices? Some people may view these practices as hypocritical, or at the very least inconsistent with widely touted notion of the United States as the land of opportunity and equity. It would seem such treatment could not be the result of the loving, caring, sharing, respectful, and honorable characteristics mentioned at the beginning of this writing. Rather, these acts were destructive, exploitative, and unjust in nature.

Caveat: Be Warned of Those Preaching the Doctrine: *'Don't do as I do, do as I say!'*

There are some people who believe that as leaders, mentors, role models, parents, and/or teachers that they are free to lead without having to practice what they preach. The reality is that when people are in leading roles, their actions, deeds and thoughts are constantly being watched by those who look up to them. If their

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actions do not fall in line with the words that they speak then a conflict results between what is practiced and what is preached. To avoid such confusion, one should lead by example in order to bring about the desired outcome.

For example, parents who tell their children not to smoke cigarettes, but continue themselves to smoke in the presence of their children exemplify the doctrine. Another example is how some people who sit listening and agreeing to the Sunday morning teaching of loving their brothers and sisters, but engage in activities and behaviors that are in opposition to the teachings (coveting, gossiping, mistreating) after services conclude.

Moreover, Thomas Jefferson wrote of fairness in the Declaration of Independence, using the words "all men are created equal" and having a right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" in America. Such words rival that of those spoken by Jesus of Nazareth who also spoke of fairness and life. The difference between the two men is found in what they practiced.   Jefferson, who was outwardly opposed to slavery, was an owner of nearly two hundred slaves and had the pseudoscientific notion that "blacks are the mental inferiors of whites" (Kirn, 2004).
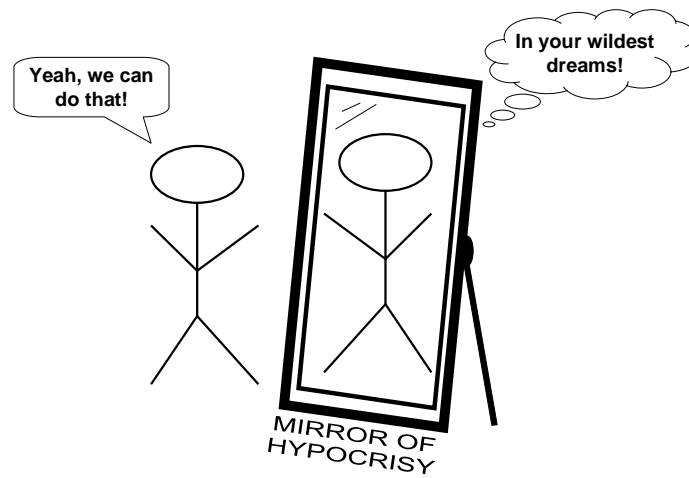
In contrast, Jesus practiced fairness and called all men to equally participate in the life he spoke and lived.

Intentions: Hypocrisy vs. Inconsistency

What makes the actions of one who is not practicing what he or she preaches inconsistent as opposed to being a hypocrite? A hypocrite is defined as a person who puts on a false appearance of virtue, or person who intentionally acts in contradiction to his or her stated beliefs or feelings. Inconsistent is defined as lacking consistency, incoherent, or illogical in thought or actions. How does hypocrisy differ from inconsistency?

Figure 4

The simple answer is that it depends on the intent of one's heart. A person may have a goal in mind, but when it comes to accomplishing that goal, they may not always choose the right path to carry it out. The person may make a series of left turns, take shortcuts, and fall off the beaten path, while all the time thinking that they are headed in the right direction. In actuality, it was clear that they really should have followed the path that had already been mapped out.

Humans sometimes fall short of the expectations set for themselves. This often occurs as a result of being inconsistent. This does not mean that their goals are somehow unachievable. Rather, what this suggests is that humans are fallible and make mistakes. At times, we are able to admit these wrong turns and get back on the right track.

There are, however, those who masquerade as supporting positive, equitable, and charitable endeavors on the surface, but inwardly completely disagree with what is taking place. In this instance, goals cannot be truly realized because of disagreement between thoughts and actions. Simply stated, "True hypocrisy requires a pretense of accepting certain moral beliefs in public while rejecting those beliefs in one's heart." (Lempres 29)

Sustaining the Character

The ABCDs, or **A**ttitude, **B**ehavior, **C**ommunication and **D**iscipline of schizophrenic character development are sustained via repetitive practice. Functionalist theorists who say, 'This is the way it's always been,' continue to justify the practice of building discommunity. As to not 'rock the boat', those who build discommunity are

reluctant to put an end to the downward spiral by failing to point out the dysfunctions that are manifest within the society. This failing encourages people continue to accept the notion that these dysfunctions are necessary and the cycle is perpetuated and passed on to subsequent generation.

When we talk about 'A' or *attitude*, we are referring to what motivates a person as seen by way of their behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that influence their outlook (which begins internally). The 'B', or *behavior*, is the outward display of a person's attitude. Attitude and behavior go hand in hand. The attitude is styled as the collective agent of the heart, collecting what is being 'brewed' in our thoughts. While attitude shows the disposition of the heart, behavior demonstrates the disposition of one's attitude.

In schizophrenic character development, a person's stated attitude and resulting behavior are in conflict with one another. This conflict, which starts at the individual level, is not addressed because human freedom and individuality are excluded in functionalism. But in order for the conflict to be adequately addressed, the struggle within

each individual must be dealt with and resolved before agreement among other members in the community can occur.

The 'C', or *communication*, is defined as a process by which information is shared between individuals through a common system, whether in written, oral, or non-verbal form. In schizophrenic character development, little or no communication occurs among the members within the system or institution. They operate independent of each other in spite of the belief that somehow they are functioning contributors to the society.

The assumption is that the social structures that help to make up society as a whole are able to balance and correct themselves whenever there are conflicts or disruptions. However, when a system is not useful, it changes or disappears, thus maintaining a balance in society (Bridges, 1986). If there were positive communication among the institutions, could the exchanges in ideas and/or thoughts prevent conflicts or ultimately, the disappearance of certain systems within the society? In inclusive community building the answer is 'yes.'

Lastly, the 'D' or *discipline* is a multifaceted word that implies, on one hand, instruction, diligence and perseverance in completing particular tasks. On the other, the term refers to a system of punishment (Williams and Hunt, 2007, p. i). Another way to define discipline is the self-restraint necessary in order for individuals to sustain themselves toward attitudes, behaviors, and factors of communication that facilitate the fostering of positive interpersonal and intra-personal relationships (Hunt, 2006).

Positive change cannot come about without commitment, focus, and perseverance of those who seek to make change happen. Discipline is needed to see a task through to the end. A lack of consistency leads to conflict, which ultimately prevents a person or group from achieving their goal.

Consequently, when one of the areas (ABCDs) is not reconciled, the entire individual or organization is off balance and stability and sustainability are not achieved. The downward spiral of discommunity building is perpetuated, conflict remains, and unity is not attained.
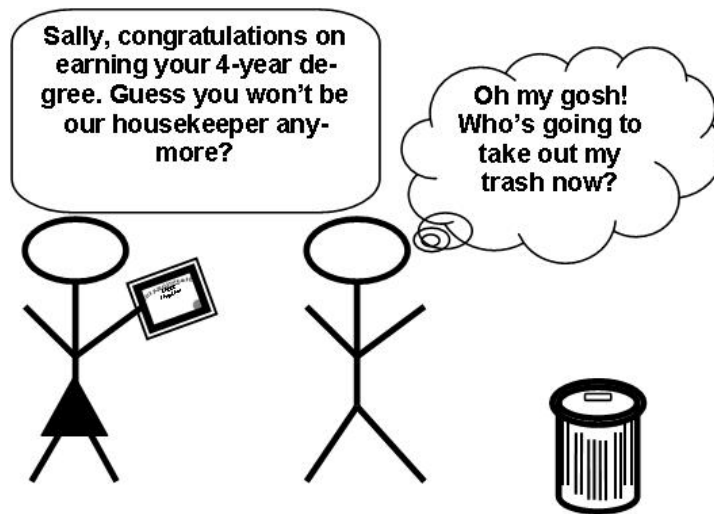
Functionalist Theory and Practice

In Functionalist Theory, both the lighter and darker sides of schizophrenic character are used to maintain the status quo. This is due to the idea that structures balance and correct themselves and continue to function in the manner in which they have operated, without disrupting the system in its entirety. These changes are made gradually, as each system has had to adjust to the intricacies within society, thus not feeling the impact of change suddenly.

When we look at the example of class inequality, the "have-nots'" place in society may, on the surface, contribute to its balance and is 'functional' for a lack of a better term. Of course, the 'haves' are in the most beneficial position. Though this balance may suggest that people wanting a better life may not outwardly rebel or cause an uprising, the conflict still remains within them and is not addressed. When conflict remains, be it overt or covert, society experiences conditions of instability, uncertainty, and dysfunction. This downward cycle continues as community building posts are erected and maintained by way of an exclusive meta-value to create an inequitable class system. Toward this end, only certain

groups benefit. Expectedly, the exclusive meta-value does not address the conflicts. Instead the exclusive meta-value paints a picture of social relationships that encourage exclusionary practices.
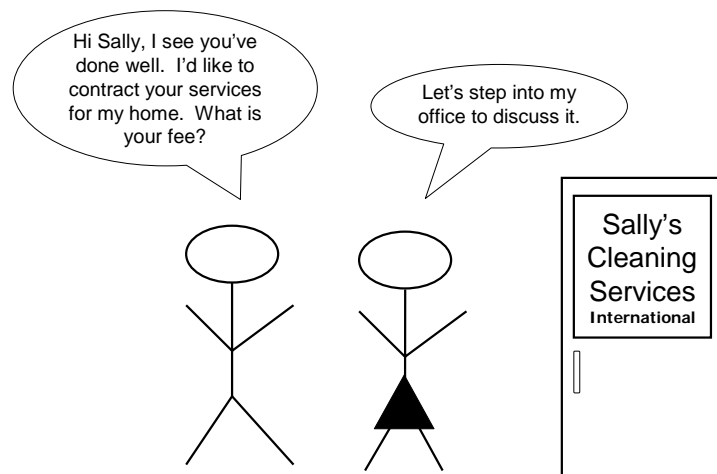
Figure 5

Post Modern Theory

The new day that is upon us requires a new theory. Functionalist Theory, in many respects, is viewed as racist, sexist and deterministic in nature. The thought behind this new theory is that the values espoused (caring, sharing, loving, trust, honor, and respect) are in line with the thoughts, deeds and actions of those who preach them.

The praxis (merging of theory and practice) of the theory is essential to sustaining positive character while building inclusive community building. It is insufficient to merely talk about it, rather, it must be put into motion and evoke change.   This post-modern theory transcends racial, gender, age, sexual orientation, educational, ethnic, socioeconomic and religious boundaries. Ultimately, this new theory ends the exclusive practices of functionalism.

Figure 6

Inclusion Meta Value: A Treatment Plan for Schizophrenic Community Building

For individuals who have been diagnosed with clinical schizophrenia, typical treatment includes taking medication including anti-psychotic drugs combined with therapy, education about the disorder, and support groups. All though there is no cure for schizophrenia, the prognosis for those living with the disorder is positive, provided that those who are diagnosed continue to follow the treatment prescribed for them.

Treatment for schizophrenic community building, however, is curable and the prognosis is very positive. When the focus or goal is to build community through collaborative efforts with others, then the inclusion meta-value is in operation. The objective, or intent, is clear: to build community in the spirit of working together. The technique used to accomplish this task, or method, is respecting each member within the group as a contributor, despite their differences. For instance, each group may be made up of people from culturally diverse backgrounds. They may have different views, beliefs, and ideas than others. However, the differences, viewed as 'variety' can

be seen as a welcome change to the community and serve to enhance the community as a whole. In turn, all contributions are honored and respected.

Figure 7

The process of building sustainable community begins with each individual. If there is a conflict within the individual, it must be unveiled and dealt with before moving forward. When the conflict is resolved, and the heart is right and true (free of deception and selfishness), one is said to have a positive **A**ttitude. This is a pivotal

moment. During this process, when a right turn is made, it signifies the attainment of a level of maturity and understanding. The outward **B**ehavior reflects the inward beliefs and motives leading to a desirable outcome.

The process continues when the individual reaches out to others for the purpose of **C**ommunicating and coming together to exchange and share thoughts and ideas for the purpose of reaching a common goal. More importantly, each person is a respected contributor, which fosters positive relationships and good communication.

Discipline is the final step in the process. Discipline is achieved when the right attitude, positive behavior, and effective communication are sustained through diligence and an unwavering heart.

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There is a light and dark side split in many individuals which is enforced by society and its institutions. This book gives hope that we can be free of this split that lends itself to the development of the Schizophrenic Community Building Character where a person says one thing, but does another. In order to overcome, a new day approach to relationship building is needed where self-reflection, inclusion, and modeling are the tools to revive the community.

— Patricia A. Harris, LMFT