

DRAGON DREAMING AS UNCONDITIONAL LOVE IN ACTION THE BASIS OF WIN-WIN-WIN SITUATIONS

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ABSTRACT: *This article presents the latest research into the nature of unconditional love and how ultimately it is this that heals our deepest wounds. Such loving lies behind the dream of every relationship and every project. It is necessarily the ultimate goal and purpose of our lives.*

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INTRODUCTION

Events of the last weeks and in trying to come to terms with their deeper meaning have demonstrated to me that the basis of building a new win-win-win culture, that lies at the heart of Dragon Dreaming, is unconditional love in action. And yet we live in a win-lose culture of gigantic proportions that is currently producing lose-lose-lose outcomes for us all at an accelerating rate, even when we do not intend this at the optimistic start of our projects. Such outcomes are a great loss for the individual people involved, a loss for the community as a whole, and a loss for the living planet itself. Having been confronted personally by a lose-lose outcome recently in which both parties have been immediately and fundamentally able to recognise the lose-lose potential of a particularly uncomfortable situation, the question arises, how do we convert lose-lose to win-win-win? And how do we distinguish unconditional love from conditional love?

The win-lose thinking on which our culture is based, is a result of decisions made early in life. It appears to be part of the human condition, that get reinforced through child rearing, education and socialisation. We have all been taught that there is something wrong with us, with our communities and with the world. In surviving childhood we have been taught that we are separate individuals and have been delivered many messages of “don’t do that...”, “Stop that...”, “Why don’t you ever listen...”, “If I have told you once, I have told you thousands of times”, on and on. And we have internalised these messages. This programming is always lying dormant, ready to be activated in the right environment, with painful consequences that seem to unfold semi automatically. And on the basis of these messages you have concluded that there was something wrong with yourself. If there was nothing wrong, the people who loved you the most, who were taking care of you wouldn’t have treated you in such a fashion.

But the reason why they did it is because they had it done to them. Basically, this is the way that the win-lose games have been perpetuated across history. It is an almost automatic result of living in a completely win-lose culture, a culture that has been built, piece by piece, over at least the last 8,000 years.

This is very unlike earlier older indigenous cultures, where childrearing was more permissive and there were powerful rituals supporting altered states of awareness which reintegrated and healed the sense of individual separation, separation from community and from life itself, that may have been implicit in the culture. Such rituals had an honoured and respected place. By comparison, in the globalised consumerist corporate international culture of which we are a part, little attention is given to rituals or experiences which heal the personal sense of separation. Instead we try to fill the void in two ways; by what we have and by what we do, as we invest these two with a sense of who we are. The altered states of consciousness that had the task of healing this self-alienating separation are today considered dangerous, are medicalised or criminalised instead, keeping the “normal” dominant competitive destructive paradigms firmly in place, and through business as usual breeding psychopathic narcissistic individuals as a result. Such people are increasingly incapable of empathy, are narcissistically centred upon their own self gratification, in which they put their own temporary desires ruthlessly ahead of all. As a result, today most people are incapable of unconditional love, and from earliest childhood their love is programmed to be conditional. In this I

Speak personally of myself as well as my experience of what I have seen in the behaviour of others close to me recently.

THEORIES ON WHAT IS UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Unconditional love is a love that continues, no matter the event, no matter the consequences of a life changing decision, an argument, or a strong belief. Like the care of mother for child in healthy parenting it is the amount of love that remains between this bond is the flow that overcomes the feelings of separation, and this flow is seen as unchanging and unconditional. In reality we are the temporary nodes that exist within this continuous flow of unconditional love, but our childhood programming leads us to deny this.

Based upon the work of C.S.Lewis¹, it is often said that there are in fact four loves, three that are conditional and one that is unconditional; affection (Storge), friendship (Philia), romantic love (Eros) are said to be conditional love and one unconditional love (Agape). They are organised in sequence, so that affection is the first. It is affection that is the start of our Dreaming, of building the relationships through which the deeper intentions of our dreams can find their expression. Friendship includes affection, and is the opening of possibilities within a deeper context of the world, the Planning out of which plans for a collective future together can begin to hatch. Romantic love includes both affection and friendship, and leads to a change in behaviour and a deeper commitment to the loved one. Romantic love thus lies in the Doing, the deep sense of expressing devotion to the beloved. Unconditional love, the highest love state includes all four; affection, friendship and romantic love. Unconditional love refers to a state of mind in which one has the goal of increasing the welfare of another, despite any evidence of presence or absence of benefit for oneself. In conditional love: love is always 'earned' on the basis of conscious or unconscious conditions being met by the lover, whereas in unconditional love, love is "given freely" to the loved one "no matter what". It is the continuity of the loving that is primary. In unconditional love we see not just anything.

Recently paraphrasing what I was writing for someone very important to me I wrote "Beyond the expectation of the other, behind any romantic desire for them, behind promises of eternal faithfulness, behind your need of them, their lies a kingdom, a realm of choice. Unconditional loving is based upon choice, a choice about a life's companion, a chosen one, to journey with together through a period of time together, with the adventures and discoveries mutually shared."

"We seek to see the other, and to be seen by them. In our glory and our magnificence, in our woundedness and our brokenness. In joy and in sorrow, in our strengths and our weaknesses. In our imperfections, those places of difficulty and challenge, where we fail to measure up to our own standards or the expectations of the world. To be known for what and who we are in a universe which through us is learning how to love itself". This is what Lewis called Agape, the unconditional love that brings us closest to what is divine and sacred.

This is the nature of unconditional love. It is a love that needs constantly to be celebrated, as without that celebration it too can die. It is this unconditional love that abolishes separation and disconnection, that humanises us and liberates us in our deeper humanity. We are not here yet. In a very real sense through unconditional loving we are not yet human beings, rather we are human becomings.

C.S.Lewis writing about the Four Loves said that just as Lucifer – the highest of the archangels – perverted himself by pride and fell into depravity, so too can all four kinds of love—commonly held to be the arch-emotion—become corrupt by presuming itself to be what it is not.

For example, affection, or storge, Lewis argued contains two elements – need love and gift love, which he considered responsible for nine tenths of all solid and lasting human relationships. Affection Lewis argues is the most natural, emotive, and widely diffused of loves: natural in that it is always present without coercion; emotive because it is the result of fondness due to a growing familiarity and acceptance; and most widely diffused because it pays the least attention to those characteristics deemed "valuable" or worthy of love and, as a result, is able to transcend most negative discriminating factors. But it is the very strength of affection that makes it vulnerable. Affection has the appearance of being "built-in" or "ready made", says Lewis, and as a result people come to expect it irrespective of their behaviour and its natural consequences. Both in its Need and its Gift form, affection then is liable to 'go bad', and to be corrupted. In such circumstances it is corrupted by not recognising what we see.

Companionship is what is the source of true friendship or philia, and is the ability to stay with someone and be there for them through thick and thin, no matter what are the conditions. Their suffering becomes my suffering, their joy becomes my joy. It is a love that can be counted upon in adversity. Friendship is the most deeply appreciative of the loves, but it too can go bad, resulting in cliquiness, us against them, wrong or right. In such circumstances, the separations that result cause fear to arise, and we finish by closing down our communication. We thus do not say what we think. In Dragon Dreaming as we know, we get blocked by not saying what we think.

Romantic love (eros) is the "being in love" state, symbolised by the Goddess Venus, or her son Eros. Eros was the son of Venus and Mars, who is the God of War, and so romantic love too has a shadow. The dark way of romantic erotic love may lead even to the point of suicide pacts or murder, as well as to furious refusals to part, "mercilessly chaining together two mutual tormentors, each raw all over with the poison of hate-in-love". In romantic love we set such high standards, and finish up by not walking the talk. We get blocked in not doing what we say.

Unconditional love (agape) is the love that brings forth caring regardless of the circumstance. So long as this lives only this kind of love ultimately cannot go bad, it alone is capable of preventing what Lewis calls, their 'demonic' self-aggrandisement of the other three kinds of love. This is the love that ultimately is essential for win-win-win. This unconditional love is a divine gift, and is the ultimate love to which we should aspire. The blockage here happens when we cannot see the gift upon which unconditional love is based and we don't see the consequences of what we do. As will be seen, it is in the impulsiveness, acting out of a deep sense of separation and disconnectedness that can prevent unconditional love and lock us into the conditional love in which we run the risk of

being winners and losers. Out of this separation and disconnection we lose our sense of trust, fear rises, and a win-lose game becomes dominant as a result, a situation which results in our everyday world now as a lose-lose-lose outcome for everyone.

C.S.Lewis's highly Christian perspective on unconditional love dovetails neatly with the perspective of Thich Nhat Hanh. Thich Nhat Hanh speaks from a Buddhist perspective on the four aspects of love unconditional love.

Maitri is loving kindness or benevolence, to bring joy to the other, to bring joy and happiness. Training is needed, where we need to practice deep looking. If you do not understand this person you cannot love. If a husband does not understand the suffering of his wife's suffering he will not be able to love her in the right way. Without it this understanding of the causes of her suffering it is impossible. To do this we must have space and time, to be attentive and deeply observing. Love is true when built on such understanding.

The second aspect of love is Karuna, deep compassion and empathy. This is the ability to carry understanding into action. Mahakaruna, the greatest compassion is the result of unconditional love. This is liberated by the practice of meditation.

Joy or Muditta is the third element. If you make the other person cry, if there is not joy that you bring to the other then love is not unconditional. Bringing suffering in place of joy is the absence, not the presence of love. This requires attention to gentleness.

Upeka is the freedom. When you bring freedom to the person then true love can flourish. You must love in such away to bring freedom to the one you love. Thay says "Dear one do you have the space, this is the test for discovering if your love is real."

Gary Chapman has argued that, emotionally, people need to receive unconditional love, but it would appear that in the win-lose world most people are only capable of conditional love. What happens is that the differences within people based upon past experience and personality determine the kind of "love language" from which they gain the greatest reward. In conditional loving people tend to use the love languages that they like the most personally themselves and then react with fear when this is not reciprocated. He suggests that rather than the love languages that their loved ones can receive the best, unconditional loving requires one to give the love language that their loved one needs the most, rather than the one with which they are most personally comfortable.

Chapman in his experience as a counsellor states that there are 5 "love languages", based upon the five core elements of personality I discuss below. These languages surprisingly relate closely to the model of personality found within Dragon Dreaming.

- Thus Celebrators respond most to the love language of the giving and receiving of gifts.
- Dreamers respond mostly to the love language of quality time together.
- Planners respond most closely to the love language of words of affective affirmation.
- Doers respond most closely to the love language of acts of service.

But despite these differences what we are seeking most is a sense of wholeness, of connection with the sense of unconditional love. This is the most intimate of the love languages, the one that goes beyond the separation between thinking and action, that re-integrates us individually with the world as a whole. This is the fifth love language, the one that alone is capable of generating new life. It is the oldest love language of touch.

In each love language it is possible to identify the specific connections with the twelve steps of dragon dreaming as illustrated in the table below. To discover your own personal love language as you read the following table tune into your body and mark which of the following suggestions seem to be the most obvious. The “language” with the highest score will be yours. Share and discuss with your beloved for maximum effect.

Characteristic	Language of Quality Time	Language of Words of Affirmation	Language of Acts of Service	Language of Giving and Receiving Gifts	The Language of Touching
Awareness	Become aware of how the other likes spending time	Cultivate awareness that words are important	Become aware if beloved uses acts of service language	Look for things in nature to give with special significance	Become aware of especially liked touches for beloved
Motivation	Set a time each day to share what happened during the day	Set goals of at least one high affirmation of the other per day	Ask what acts of service demonstrate love & work into daily schedule	Make a commitment to engage in spontaneous gifting	Find opportunities for hand holding or secret caresses
Information Gathering	Identify 3 special ways of spending time together	Gather a vocabulary of different affirmation words	Gather information on 10 acts and give each a priority score	Identify the likes & dislikes of gifts for the beloved	Discover what touch your beloved especially likes
Considering Alternatives	Ask the other for a list of 5 enjoyable activities	Consider alternative words that can be used appropriately	Make a list of tasks requested of you last week	Keep a gift idea notebook	Explore diversity of different ways to touch
Designing Strategies	Plan a longer "getaway" period where you can be together	Look for the strengths in the other and share them	Plan to perform one each week as expression of your love	Plan a special gift once a week	Plan an act of physical affection on a daily basis
Testing & Trialling	"Camp out" at home without distractions	Choose a daily appreciative word to use	Write the requests before checking them	Try a parade of gifts in one special day to refill love tank	Test to see if touching works and modify appropriately
Implementation	Make a list of 5 questions to answer and share them	Write an appreciation letter of the other & give without fan-fare	Identify a service nag point & see nag as a tag to do it	Enrol others in game of giving your beloved a significant gift	Demonstrate physical affection by touching in public
Management & Administration	Get away from the everyday normal way you relate	Complement the beloved in the presence of others	In absence of beloved enrol others in giving a surprise service	Make something special, even enrol in a class to make it	When partner is seated give a stress release massage or rub

Monitoring Progress	After these activities stop and decide on next time	Record daily words of affirmation that work best	Display a card showing services planned and delivered	Chose a book of interest & read it aloud to your beloved	When you are together go out of your way to touch repeatedly
Acquiring New Skills	Visit a place from childhood and share joys and sadness	Cultivate skill of appreciative sharing	Learn to provide 3 unsolicited services monthly	Learn how to make special gifts	Take a course in learning massage
Transformative Results	Repeat previous steps & observe results	Watch the effects and change use appropriately	Perform major service & leave a note of love & appreciation	Give a gift to charity & ask them to send appreciation to beloved	Touch partner in presence of others to show they are seen
Discerning Wisdom	Find what is preventing quality time and remove it	Continue & persist in using the skill	Enrol others to perform a special act of service	Give a living gift * put in a visible place to grow	Reach and touch the beloved as often as possible

Carl Rogers² stated that if unconditional love can grow, it needs the watering of the Seeds (similar to that which Buddhist Psychology and Thich Nhat Hanh calls “watering the mannas”). The route to growing unconditional love, Rogers believes is that the individual needed an environment that provided them with genuineness, authenticity, openness, self-disclosure, acceptance, empathy, and approval. Abraham Maslow³, saw unconditional love as the highest form of self realisation. He believed that all of us have behaviours that we do not accept in ourselves and thus are subject to deeply held self hatred. Maslow believed that for the unconditional love perspective to grow, through the love of another an individual had to grow more and more to have a more positive perspective of themselves. This is where the caring for another, no matter what, acts as the tonic necessary for this growing self-regard, healing the self-hatred that lies in the core of each person.

THE INTERNAL WIN-LOSE GAME

Despite all this research I find that the origins of the barriers to unconditional loving seem poorly understood. In Dragon Dreaming workshops I always explain that the worst kind of prejudice is not racism, sexism or class prejudice. In fact it is prejudice against oneself as that is the only one we cannot easily escape from. Growing up in the families we have, and going to school, I believe, makes us deeply and nearly permanently prejudiced against ourselves. For example the process of “normal” socialisation Cheri Huber⁴ teaches us automatically

- To assume that there is something wrong within us
- To look for internal flaws within us

- To judge the flaws when we find them
- To hate ourselves for being such a flawed person
- To punish and beat ourselves up to force us to change
- To assume this is the way we can become good

Huber continues to show how in the modern world socialisation does not teach us

- To love ourselves for our abiding goodness
- To appreciate ourselves for who we really are
- To deeply trust ourselves
- To have confidence in our abilities
- To look within our bodies and heart for guidance
- To not believe that to do these things is egoist and “self centred”

This automatic negative programming creates an almost unshakable wheel of inference that interferes with and is the opposite of Dragon Dreaming and seems to go as follows. Firstly the child is born. At first all we have is undifferentiated experience, an ocean of unseparated one-ness. Everything just is. In the first step, the child is taught to turn away from the self towards another to get their needs met (and so starts distrusting internal intuitive knowledge). As we create our first memory we separate our experience into a dualism – a sense of “me”, in here, and a sense of the world, out “there”. This separation comes with a huge price.... It seems that “I am so small and insignificant. The world is so large and threatening. If I can make myself small enough, I will survive”! Most come to feel this. Alternatively we come to believe with about four percent of the total population, “if I can suppress my fears and emotions, do anything it takes I can get control of the world and of others, and I will survive”. This, as Kevin Dutton shows in his new book is the origin of Psychopathy⁵, this sets up the toxic pattern of the dominator and the dominated that is the ultimate basis of the win-lose world in which we live.

As a result of experience when our needs are not met, we come to believe it is because we are bad, we interpret this as negative we make assumptions about ourselves, which produce expectations. The child then abandons itself in order to be whom the others (parents, teachers) want it to be, “I should...., I ought...., I must....”. Then in gathering information, that information that confirms our assumptions and expectations is given greatest weight. Then when it comes to testing and trialling our strategies, we design tools based upon our assumptions. In the development of survival behaviours, the separated ego, adopts self denying, self destructive behaviours that shut down our emotions in both dominator and dominated; we over eat, we over work (we over anything....) to create emotional blanketing and stuff down our feelings. Suffering is always the result, and it confirms our identity as being separate not being good enough. To avoid suffering we believe we have to change, with which we struggle in trying to fix what is wrong within ourselves. Caught in this double-bind we hate ourselves and believe we must change in order to survive, but our failures to change just confirms our belief that there is something wrong with ourselves.

Given this we seek others to allow us to temporarily escape from ourselves. Our need for a reassuring other to fulfil our parent’s shoes. In our history, the collapse of community and later even of extended families during centuries of the wars of religion and the following scientific and

industrial revolutions, led to the privatisation of parenting. Two adults alone, often little more than children themselves, became socially and legally responsible for meeting all of the needs of their children. The degree of social insecurity this created on both sides has rarely been mentioned – children all fear, “what would happen to me if something were to rob me of my parents?” This coupled with the asymmetric relative power of the parent-child relationship and the fact that even the best parents cannot meet all of the child’s needs creates in many cases a desire in the person for an authority figure that will substitute for the parent, and heal the unfulfilled promises of childhood. The obedience given to another, an authority figures, thus stems in some ways from our desire for approval from our absent parents. Getting it right, leads us to seek out and repeat unresolved conflicts with these authority figures.

But such situations can turn toxic. Structures of violence “create” toxic behaviours as shown in the Zimbardo Stanford prison experiment. All is not lost, however, when an awareness happens that allows victims to see and consciously refrain from duplication of such toxic behaviours.

In our need for security and certainty, we finish up sacrificing our freedom. Freedom in the absence of community, can leave us feeling isolated, lonely and powerless. In such cases we will tend to gravitate towards another who make us feel safe, protected and good about ourselves. Such people may also foster a sense that we are somehow “special” or “chosen”, gratifying our fearful sense that we are perhaps deeply unworthy. Seeking to avoid vulnerability, we seek to gain security at the expense of our freedom. The work of Chilean economist Manfred Max Neef⁶ demonstrates that such satisfiers of our needs are pseudo-satisfiers, or may even be violators of some deeper aspect of who and what we are. These are strategies that while promising to satisfy our needs, in fact prevent these or other needs from ever being truly satisfied.

Finally what we observe in monitoring our progress is most often in alignment with our expectations and assumptions, which thus shows what we expected in fact is “real” or “true”. We come to distrust our skills and capacities and permanently disempower ourselves. We become locked into one particular view of reality, and as Ernest Becker, and Otto Rank have shown that ideological struggles over “truth”, are due to a projection of the self perpetrating concern to have a deeper meaning to life. It becomes a case that if your opponent wins the argument about “truth” *you die*. This wheel of inference is the source of our loss of trust and our automatic and almost unshakable skills in playing personal win-lose games in situations of any difficulty take over.

How do we escape from such a destructive cycle? I believe it can only be by making unconditional love in action as our ultimate goal. This cannot be hurried, it is not an easy path. It is beset with pitfalls and traps that are all too easy to fall into. It is the commitment to travel this path that is the ultimate source of the power of Dragon Dreaming. Each time we celebrate it is because we have travelled past one further milestone on this, our ultimate journey.

THE NEUROLOGY OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

In Dragon Dreaming workshops, I often point out that the differences between Dreaming, Planning, Doing and Celebrating exist and work in reality because it reflects the architecture, structure and functioning of the human brain. What about love, and the differences between conditional and unconditional love? The research shows that it is true, the difference between conditional and unconditional love doesn't just exist in philosophy or psychology, it actually extends into measurable differences in our brains.

Neurological differences⁷ are found in the brains between the conditional and unconditional loving states. With conditional romantic or erotic loving magnetic resonance imaging of the brain shows the greatest activity in three particular regions of the brain. In unconditional love in addition to these three areas, there were four additional areas that showed a peak area of activity. For example in both conditional and unconditional love the Amygdala, that seems to be the emotional powerhouse of the brain, showed heightened activity. Also in both conditional and unconditional love, the reward areas of the brain were active, but in conditional love it was those areas that were dependent upon extrinsic rewards, on the behaviour of the other, that showed greatest activity. In unconditional love, the reward areas that seemed intrinsic to the internal intrinsic state that were most stimulated. The reward in unconditional loving stemmed not from conditions but from the act of loving itself. Through the associations made between the different regions, results show that the feeling of love for someone without the need of being extrinsically rewarded is different from the feeling of conditional romantic love where the extrinsic reward of a specific behaviour set from the object of the love was required. The brains of people who love unconditionally was thus different from those who loved conditionally and these could be clearly discriminated.

The biggest difference seen in conditional and unconditional love was in the area of the brain called the nucleus accumbens, which is a part that lies in the basal ganglia, just above the limbic system at the bottom interior of the frontal lobe of the forebrain. Together with the amygdala, this part of the brain is most responsive on levels of emotion, compassion and empathy, the ability to have the strongest care for the suffering of others, even at the risk of one's own safety. It is this that makes an unconditionally loving like a mother capable of rescuing their child even at risk of their own personal safety. The nucleus accumbens has been shown to be the area that is involved in laughter, and the ability to see humour in any situation, even laughing at oneself, in giving rewards or gifts to others, in reinforcement learning and the placebo effect, when it is linked to rational activity of the forebrain. It also shows activity in the negative areas of aggression, fear, impulsivity and addiction when this forebrain activity is absent. The nucleus accumbens is one of the strongest dopamine modifying pleasure centres of the brain that was studied, and seems strongly involved in situations of "the flow" state of optimal human performance. The nucleus accumbens is especially active when mothers are with their children, and damage and lesions to this area interferes with the ability of a mother to love her children unconditionally and results in eventual damage to the child. It is the nucleus accumbens that has also been shown to be most active when there is the assumption of effectiveness of an administered placebo, and thus it is very highly correlated with the ability to heal oneself.

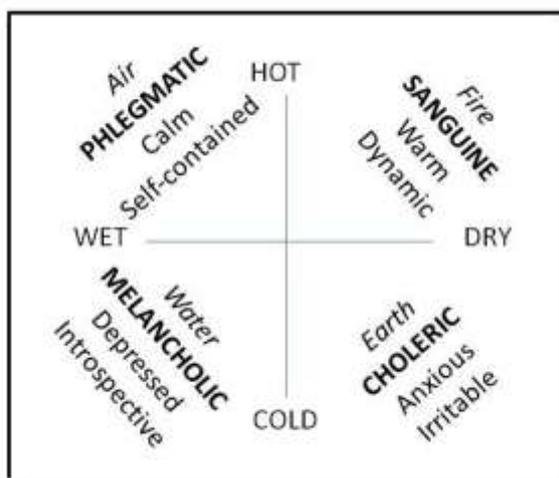
But this part of the brain is highly connected, particularly through the medium spiny neurones that have an inhibitory function, with the prefrontal cortex region considered to be orchestration of thoughts and actions in accordance with internal goals, which handles rational planning through

consideration of consequences. It is what allows the general impulsivity that otherwise comes from the Amygdala to be modulated. Failure to modulate these emotions through rational consideration can result in suffering for the individual and for those with whom they are engaged. The situation may become toxic.

PERSONALITY TYPES AND DRAGON DREAMING

If this is so, then how to make sense of a loss of love? Is it just a reflection of differences between people that we believe are irreconcilable? For this we need a better understanding of the differences that exist between people. Is it just a result of the differences that exist between personality types?

In Dragon Dreaming Intensive Workshops we do a test to help people identify their comfort zone, based upon two dimensions. The first dimension is the primary underpinning of a person’s personality, the degree to which they are extrovert or introvert. This dimension was brought into modern psychology by Carl Gustav Jung and his studies of Greek Alchemy. Hippocrates and other Greek philosophers had earlier divided between the temperamental “humours” or elements on a grid as follows:



Along with various assumptions about male activity and positivity and female passivity and negativity, this “humeric” description lasted for over nearly 2,000 years.

Jung took this one step further and divided between two primary types of temperaments – the extravert and the introvert. Based upon exhaustive questionnaires followed up by interviews, Hans Eysenck⁸ revised Hippocrates to suggest that Choleric and Sanguine represented emotionally unstable and emotionally stable extroverts, and Phlegmatic and Melancholic

similarly represented emotionally stable and unstable introverts.

Thus positive extroversion (Sanguine) characteristics included

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociable • Talkative • Easygoing • Carefree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outgoing • Responsive • Lively • Leadership
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Negative extroversion or neurotic (Choleric) characteristics included

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restless
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive • Changeable • Optimistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excitable • Impulsive • Active
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Similarly positive emotionally stable (Phlegmatic) introvert characteristics were

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passive • Thoughtful • Controlled • Even Tempered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful • Peaceful • Reliable • Calm
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Negative neurotic unstable (Melancholic) introvert characteristics were

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet • Reserved • Sober • Anxious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsociable • Pessimistic • Rigid • Moody
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Although there has been disagreement about the placement of some of Eysenck’s characteristics, and their limited number, I find them a useful starting point in identifying comfort (and discomfort) zones in Dragon Dreaming. Extroverts, I believe tend to be more “other” directed, taking their primary personality from their environment, whereas introverts find themselves more “inner” directed, through taking their emotional cues from within themselves.

Gordon Allport⁹, working from a dictionary identified 18,000 words related to personality and temperament which through analysis he reduced to 4,500. Cattell reduced this list further to 171, and later to 16 primary factors. Still later others¹⁰ reduced this list to 5. These 5 dominant character traits are linked to our development, and we each have a mixture of these. In Dragon Dreaming I refine this to use two dimensions of four of these characteristics. In particular, I feel these two factors other than extroversion and introversion relate most to how people work together and make decisions.

Thus there are those who are open to new experience, they tend to be those who like perceiving newly, and thinking globally. These people are at home in theory, in concepts and in thinking and thought. Positively they tend to be imaginative, liking variety and independence. Less positively they are often not very practical, they avoid routine, and are nonconforming, they can also be disorganised, careless and a little impulsive.

Those people who are more practical tend to be more conscientious than the first group. They tend to be more organised, careful and self disciplined, liking routine, more practical, they learn more by doing, and are more conforming. They are more interested in percepts rather than concepts, they are more interested in acting locally and being personally than the first group.

Another category, not found in earlier studies is Agreeable. Although these people may have some of the introvert nature, mentioned above, in being retiring, sober and reserved, they are also soft-hearted, trusting and helpful. Their inner focus makes it often easier to get in touch with their feelings of empathy and compassion. Those low on agreeableness tend to be more ruthless, suspicious or uncooperative.

Thus the dominant current theory of personality is that there are 5 major dimensions in personality as follows

1. **Openness to New Experiences:** linked to fantasy, aesthetics, feeling and actions, ideas and visions and a sense of internal values
2. **Extroversion:** shows up in gregariousness, warmth, assertiveness, activity, excitement seeking and optimistic positive emotions.
3. **Conscientiousness:** is linked to competence, order, dutifulness, striving for achievement, self-discipline and deliberation
4. **Agreeableness:** links trust and trustfulness, straightforwardness, thoughtfulness, altruism, empathy and compassion and compliance, modesty, humility and tenderness
5. **Neuroticism:** is characterised by the traits of high anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self preoccupation, impulsiveness and vulnerability and pessimism.

We all have aspects of all five within us to a greater or lesser degree. What I find interesting is that these relate five characters relate to the Dragon Dreaming thresholds in an interesting fashion. Thus Openness to New Experiences is the threshold that connects the “Perceiving Newly” of the Dreaming Stage to the “Thinking Globally of the Planning Stage. Extroversion as discussed already, is where an individual takes the basis of their personality from the environment in which they find themselves. It connects the “Thinking Globally” to “Acting Locally”. Conscientiousness relates to the threshold between “Acting Locally” and “Being Personally”. It is the practical application and source of the development of our personal skills. Finally Agreeable personalities, are those that take their emotional colouration from the threshold of “Being Personally” to “Perceiving Newly”. But what of Neuroticism? If the goal of Dragon Dreaming truly is Empowerment, then the Neuroticism axis is a measure of the personal growth in which we still need to engage. Is it out of our Neuroticism that the breakdown of loving occurs? To discover an answer to this question we first need to examine the other four personality traits at greater depth

In Dragon Dreaming we use these characteristics to map out one’s comfort zone and diagnose one’s likely strengths and weaknesses. Thus –

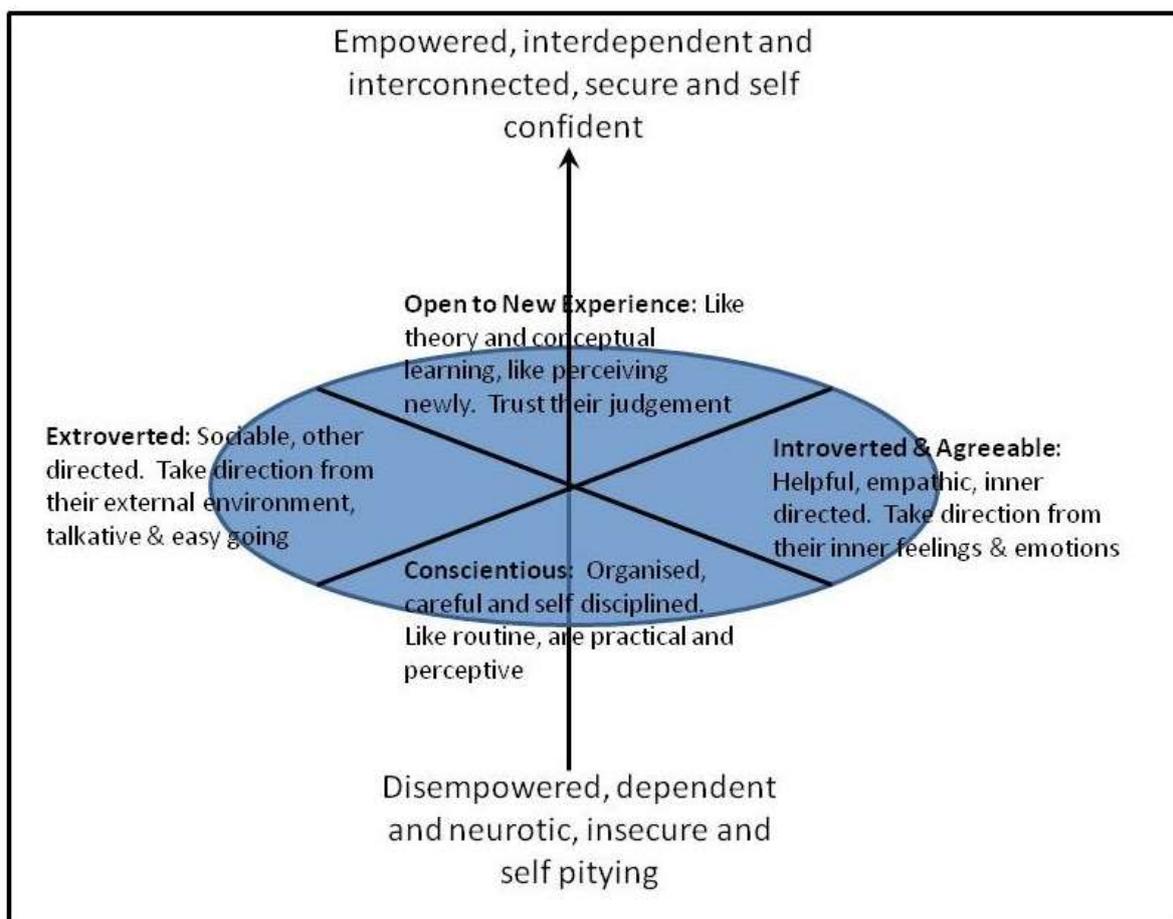
Dreamers: Are open to new experience, are more intuitive, in touch with their visions and intentions, and tend also to be agreeable and slightly more introverted than others. They need directional leadership, and learn best through engaging the imagination through good stories.

Planners: Are also open to new experience, but are more judgemental, in touch with goals and objectives. They tend to be extroverts, comfortable in engaging with the natural environment and with other people. They need effective coaching and learn best through understanding the concepts.

Doers: Are more conscientious, self-disciplined and committed to making things happen. They learn best through perceiving what is happening when they are doing it, and like the extroverts, are comfortable in engaging within the natural world. Doers are less interested in the overall strategy but are more interested in others behaviour and in appropriate support for what they are doing.

Celebrators: Are the group that is most agreeable, and like seeing what happens at the completion of the task. They are interested in the review process, the meta-cognition, of knowing what can be learned from what has been done, and celebrating the satisfactory completion of the tasks completed and of the people who have been engaged for who they are. Celebrators are interested not just in the product, but also in the process. For them the end does not justify the means.

This personality structure does not just apply to humans. It is also widespread in mammals. James King and Aurelio Figueredo¹¹ have found that the five factor model is also found in Chimpanzee behaviour. The same is true of the spotted hyena. Silke Haggemeyer, a “horse whisperer” of Sieben Linden Ecovillage in Germany, has found the same personality types in her horses. Sam Gosling, who did the work with hyenas, has also found the same differences in sociability with Octopuses! It seems to be a result of the construction of our brains and nervous systems, required to function in wider social groups.



The fifth category of Neuroticism I feel does not fall at all in the current Dragon Dreaming wheel in mapping comfort zones, but can be considered a vertical axis, stretching upwards, from

disempowered neuroticism, to empowered humanisation and liberation. Movement along this axis, I believe, is the movement propelled by and moving towards unconditional love. The symptoms of disempowerment are linked to insecurity, worry and self pity, while those of empowerment are traits of security, self-confidence, calmness and satisfaction. This state occurs as one grows personal strengths in all four quadrants, the state that conditional love denies and limits. The strengthening of the growth of unconditional loving is a long-term result of the learning that occurs through doing successful projects together.

How does this relate to the nature of win-win-win that I believe lies at the heart of unconditional love in action? Clearly people are different, with different strengths and weaknesses. We have areas of profound glory and magnificence, but also growing up in a culture based upon win-lose games and the fear of lose-lose outcomes, we have our wounds and brokenness. These shadows are difficult to acknowledge, especially when so often incompetency is linked to punishment, judgementalism and dismissal. In such a world we tend to see differences as threatening not as enriching. When we are confronted by such differences we tend to withdraw away from empowerment, we lose trust, we feel disconnected and may respond with fear. Such fear leads to entrenching win-lose games, and so love although it may be considered as unconditional, in fact becomes highly conditional upon someone else meeting my needs. All situations become reduced to a win-lose argument or debate, rather than a dialogue between equals, or a situation where emergence, the process of letting go in order to let come, occurs. Rather than the deep listening of Pinakarri, we get locked into analysis paralysis, and then people not only start reacting out of assumptions and expectations about the nature of the other, they become not present in themselves. And worse, not only are they not present for either themselves or the other person, they are completely unaware of this lack of presence. We self sabotage. Unconditional loving in such an environment cannot survive.

THOSE INCAPABLE OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE AND WIN-LOSE PSYCHOPATHY

If win-win-win games are those that require, and help produce the state of unconditional love in action, what about win-lose games? Do they sculpt our brains and our personalities in a certain direction? The latest finding in neuroscience suggests that the nerves that fire together wire together. Do win-lose games prevent win-win games because they make people a certain way?

Evidence suggests that about 4% of the population are incapable of unconditional love. In fact they feel little or no empathy with the suffering of others, and appear incapable of feeling any compassion whatsoever for losers. To such people, emotions are an irrelevant distraction. Normal people experience beta waves in periods of high emotional alertness and arousal, through alpha and theta waves, to delta waves associated with deep dreamless sleep. Psychopaths are those who often demonstrating theta rhythms of drowsiness or disconnected meditative states, when subject to images of suffering and distress which in normal people make them emotionally engaged with a Beta rhythm. They don't react the same way to emotion. In the Psychopath, daring replaces caring,

allowing men to do great damage to themselves, others, the community and the natural environment. This explains in part their risk taking behaviours, their brains don't respond like ours.

At the same time, this emotional disconnectedness allows psychopaths to analytically determine the vulnerability and weaknesses of potential victims from the smallest of clues.

The latest research findings are showing the personality factors and brain functioning associated with psychopathic serial killers, such as an arrogant belief in their own grandiose self worth, charismatic persuasiveness and superficial charm, ruthless lack of remorse, and manipulative coercion of others, are being found with others. They are being regularly found with politicians and world leaders, share traders and CEOs, in the prosecuting attorney who in interrogation can calmly destroy the life of a rape victim through ruthless cross examination, and all take no responsibility for the consequences of their acts. This seems to be the traits associated with being the winner in a win-lose world. Their character traits all show a focused charm, ruthlessness, amorality, determination, ruthlessness and empathic insensitivity. What they all have in common is that they play win-lose games and they play to win at any price.

But psychopaths can be detected beneath their superficial charm, their grandiose self-worth, pathological lying and dishonesty and their cunning manipulation, and women appear to be able to do this better than can men. Men have more difficulty here and are more easily recruited into toxic organisations run by psychopaths. In fact psychopathy is almost exclusively a male phenomenon.

But how can psychopathy be detected? For example one way to detect the difference is by the following thought experiment. Consider a run-away train hurtling towards five people unable to escape in time. You have the choice in changing the track where it will kill one person. Should you hit the switch. Most people say yes, this is an impersonal dilemma of what is called "cold empathy". But in the second example, there is a fat stranger on the footbridge and his bulk would stop the train, should you push him off the bridge to save the 5 lives. Even more telling, consider a transplant surgeon has 5 victims all needing different organs. A healthy young drifter with no roots comes to town, who has compatible organs. If the young man were to disappear, no suspicion would fall on the doctor. What should he do? This has shifted the situation significantly and made it a personal "hot empathy" state. In a shift from an impersonal dilemma to a personal one the fMRI shows intense activity in the Amygdala and associated orbitofrontal cortex, that regulates input from the emotions in decision making, for a normal person, and the right fronto-temporal junction that is linked to moral decision making. But there is no such activity for a psychopath. What is demonstrated for the psychopathic personality is a purely utilitarian, win-lose logic system. Push the fat man over, kill the loser, it is obvious. Normal people seem to not be able to react in such a way. They seem to be more capable of suspending what would seem to be the logical judgement in the cases shown. It is as if they can believe that an unknown win-win outcome, where the train could be stopped, or the patients receive their organs in time, is still possible, just not yet discovered.

This utilitarian cold logic is what enables psychopaths to be the winner in a win-lose situation. It is found in criminality too. Psychopathic criminals seem more "successful" in their criminal behaviour than others. Examining the difference between two kinds of people imprisoned for murder,

Jacobson and Gottman separate a difference between psychopathic “cobras” and aggressive “pit-bulls”

Cobra (Psychopaths)	Pit-Bulls (Aggressives)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays planned violence towards others • Feels little remorse • Motivated by immediate gratification • Able to let go and move on • Feels superior to all • Fast talker, spins a good story • Charming and charismatic • Seeks control of situation & not being told what to do • Traumatic upbringing usually present • Impermeable to therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence towards proximate people • Shows a degree of guilt and remorse • Motivated by fear of abandonment • Obsessive, often stalker • Adopts the role of being a victim • Demonstrates emotional behaviour • Depressed and introverted • Control means constant monitoring of partners’ behaviours • Degree of violence in family background • Occasional response to treatment

In the psychopathic personality inventory (PPI) the independent characteristics of the psychopathic personality are Machiavellian Egocentricity (ME), impulsive Nonconformity (IN), Blame Externalisation (BE), Carefree Nonplanfulness (CN), Fearlessness (F), Social Potency(SOP), Stress Immunity (STI) and Coldheartedness (C).

It appears that there is a genetic component to all of this. A neurotransmitter metabolising gene found only in men, which controls the monoamine oxidase A (MAOA), and which has been linked to aggressive win-lose “warrior” behaviour in mice, predicts psychopathic tendencies in men who have been neglected as children. Through assessing children from adolescence to adulthood, it was discovered¹² that boys who were abused or neglected, and who possessed the gene coding for low levels of MAOA, have an increased risk of becoming psychopaths. Children with a similar background who did not have the gene rarely developed such problems.

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from this. Fortunately for us the number of such psychopaths is very limited, but they can have an impact historically way beyond their number. In hierarchical patriarchal cultures, one way for a woman to reproduce successful offspring is to conceive them from the alpha male, and psychopaths are interested in becoming alpha males in any win-lose situation. Psychopaths do not adhere to social conventions such as honesty, responsibility, accountability or monogamy. They are for the losers. On the basis of the human genome diversity project, today it has been estimated that 5% of the population of the region between the Caspian Sea and Korea are descended from one 13th Century Psychopath. This was most probably the man called Temujin, but known to us as Ghenghiz Khan. History tends to single out such psychopaths for reward and acclaim. Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Adolph Hitler, Shaka Zulu, all exhibit psychopathic characteristics. It is interesting that all of these figures had difficulty relating to their fathers, either as a result of abuse or their absence, and had domineering ambitious and controlling mothers. These people’s ability to exude charm, their low levels of anxiety and their stress immunity, coupled with extreme ruthlessness have been characteristics that greatly contributed to their historical success.

These characteristics also have been demonstrated by Falkenbach and Tsoulakis¹³ in front-line “hero” populations, for example in bomb disposal, law enforcement, in micro-surgery and the military, where win-lose games are the basis of their operational structure. Successful lawyers and media personalities also show the same character. Conventionally all these figures have often sought status and prestige and displayed a wanton disregard for stable unconditionally loving relationships. They appear capable of using women for their own personal satisfaction or political power, having little regard to the suffering they later may cause. Surprisingly it is not just in their ability to rise to incredible levels of power where the historic figures above have had the ability to kill millions, that characterises such psychopathological people. “Civilised cultures” as they are all based upon win-lose games all reward the winners and punish the losers. Lilienfeld, Rubenzer and Faschingbauer¹⁴ sent out the psychopathic personality inventory (PPI) to the biographers of every US President asking them to rate their subjects on 240 categories, with such items as “You should take advantage of others before they do it to you”, or “I never feel guilty about hurting people”. The results were interesting. The two presidents that had the highest scores were John Kennedy and Bill Clinton, with both Roosevelts very high too.

What does this mean? Psychopathy seems to be a highly adaptive characteristic to win-lose cultures, that make unconditional loving more difficult. And the trends are showing that since the 1970s at least in the USA if not other developed countries, psychopathic tendencies are spreading. Epigenetics, where embedded protein switches in the cell membrane, rewiring us through diet, stress and even prenatal nutrition, allow the environment to determine expression of long buried ancestral genes. When coupled with high intelligence psychopathic tendencies will make you a winner in the win-lose structures of power, status and prestige, and the winners will attempt to take control in politics and economics to make it easier for themselves and others like them to get to the top. This is the reason for the mortgage collapse and the 2007 World Financial Crisis, the result of risks taken by irresponsible psychopathic traders and financiers. Unconditional love in such circumstances becomes increasingly difficult, and lack of trust of self, of others and of the world spreads rapidly as a result. Win-win-win, based upon unconditional love in action, becomes rarer. This is another reason why the “occupy movement”, with their analysis of culpability of the 1%, is so accurate. We need to reverse these trends and Dragon Dreaming is part of the answer.

CONCLUSION

In Dragon Dreaming every project is a bridge between where we have come from and where we are going. For some the gap is small and easy to cross. For others it is a yawning chasm, deep and threatening. In our development towards learning how to love others unconditionally it is the same. How great a sacrifice are we prepared to make?

But our life is also a bridging project, our ultimate project, between two mysteries; the mystery of where was I before birth, and where will I be after death. We cannot know, we can only make assumptions. Whatever the case, every project, as I was reminded by Sam Nelson one evening recently, is a story, a story which we weave ourselves, and it is these stories that confer meaning to our lives. They are the method by which we make sense of the cosmos, of ourselves and of each

other. Aboriginal people enshrine such stories artistically, as parts of a song-line, a larger story that can be sung and danced. We need to do the same.

In another context, for a wedding invitation I recently wrote "A songline is part of the Australian Aborigines "Dreaming" spirituality, a specific path across the land which marks the route taken by creators. The paths of the songlines are recorded in traditional songs, stories, dance, and painting, shared through special gatherings, called in Western Australia, a "karlapgur kenning". By singing the songlines in the appropriate sequence, a knowledgeable person is able to navigate vast distances, travelling through the trackless deserts of Australia's interior across the land by repeating the words of the song, which connect the location of these "karlapgur" meeting places, with landmarks, waterholes, and other natural phenomena. The continent of Australia was thus an extensive system of many thousands of songlines, spanning the lands of different language groups, where different parts of the song were in those different languages. Languages were no barrier because the melodic contour and rhythm of the song describes the nature of the land over which the song passes and is crucial to understanding the song. Listening to the song of the land is the same as walking on this songline and observing and taking care of the land.

Bruce Chatwin writes the creator "*being who wandered over the continent in the Dreamtime, singing out the name of everything that crossed their path - birds, animals, plants, rocks, waterholes - and so singing the world into existence.*" By repeating the songline, people took care as custodians of the land as the songline explained their obligations to the land and to each other."

In this way, like ships in the night, people meet, but such meetings though they may last for years, are always only temporary. Thich Nhat Hanh, writing in Paris, 1967, in his book "Love in Action"¹⁵ speaks of this when he states that "Love enables us to see things that those who are without love cannot see". He continues "Where do we come from and where do we go? Are the other shore and this shore one or two? Is there a river that separates the two sides, a river that no boat can cross? Is such a complete separation possible? Please come over to my boat. I will show you that there is a river, but there is no separation. Don't hesitate: I will row the boat myself. You can join me in rowing too, but let us row slowly, and very, very quietly" (p.10)

This I know, all separation is an illusion, my life, a part of all life, a part of the whole, extends far beyond the boundaries and limitations of a separate me from you. Why do we make the same mistakes over and over again? To truly come to know thyself is only possible through unconditional loving in the eyes of another. We are here together at this time and place for that reason, to learn how to unconditionally love ourselves and others. As my wife, soulmate and partner Vivienne used to say, what is important is people loving people. As she wrote in her last poetic communication she said, "The Earth can show us how." Love is real, an unfolding natural phenomena of the universe that carries on beyond our individual disillusion of separation. Our lives are not our own, from womb to tomb we are bound to others. Each kindness, each honesty, each gentleness ripples throughout eternity with consequences we cannot even begin to guess at. What we are is but a drop in a limitless ocean, but what is such an ocean but a limitless number of such drops? Unconditional loving spreads.

¹ Lewis, C.S. (1960). *The Four Loves*. Ireland: Harvest Books

² Rogers, C. (1973). The Interpersonal Relationship: The Core of Guidance. In Raymond M. Maslowski, Lewis B. Morgan (Eds.), *Interpersonal Growth and Self Actualization in Groups* (pp. 176-189). MSS Information Corporation.

³ Maslow, A.H. (1961). "Peak Experiences as Acute Identity Experiences". *Am. J. Psychoanal.* **21**: 254–260.

⁴ Huber, Cheri (2012) "Regardless of what you were taught to believe There Is Nothing Wrong With You: going beyond self hate" (Keep it Simple Books"

⁵ Dutton, Kevin (2013) "The Wisdom of the Psychopath: Lessons in Life from Saints, Spies and Serial Killers" (Heineman)

⁶ Max Neef, Manfred, "Human Scale Development"

⁷ Beauregard, Mario; Courtemanche, Jérôme; Paquette, Vincent; St-Pierre, Évelyne Landry (2009-05-15). "The neural basis of unconditional love" *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging* **172** (2): 93–98. They state "The main goal of this functional magnetic resonance imaging study was to identify the brain regions supporting this form of (unconditional) love. Participants were scanned during a control condition and an experimental condition. In the control condition, participants were instructed to simply look at a series of pictures depicting individuals with intellectual disabilities. In the experimental condition, participants were instructed to feel unconditional love towards the individuals depicted in a series of similar pictures. Significant loci of activation were found, in the experimental condition compared with the control condition, in the middle insula, superior parietal lobule, right periaqueductal gray, right globus pallidus (medial), right caudate nucleus (dorsal head), left ventral tegmental area and left rostro-dorsal anterior cingulate cortex. These results suggest that unconditional love is mediated by a distinct neural network relative to that mediating other emotions. This network contains cerebral structures known to be involved in romantic love or maternal love. Some of these structures represent key components of the brain's reward system."

⁸ Eysenck, Hans (1958), "A Short Questionnaire for the Measurement of Two Dimensions of Personality" (*Journal of Applied Psychology* Vol 42, No.1 pp.14-17)

⁹ Allport, Gordon, et al, (1936) "Trait names: a psycho-lexical study" (*Psychological Monographs*, Vol 47, No. 1 pp.1-171) and Raymond B. Cattell (1957), *Personality and Motivational Structure and Measurement*" (World Book Co.)

¹⁰ Tupes, Ernest C. & Raymond E. Cristal (1961), "Recurrent Personality Factors Based on Trait Ratings" (*Journal of Personality* Vol 60, No 2, pp.225-251)

¹¹ King, James E. & Aurelio J. Figueredo (1997) "The five factor model plus dominance in Chimpanzee personality" (*Journal of Research in Personality* Vol 31 pp.257-271) and also Gosling, Samuel D. and Oliver P. John (1999) "Personality Dimensions in Non Human Animals" (*Current Directions in Psychological Science*, Vol 8, No. 3 pp.69-75)

¹² Caspi, Avshalom et al (2002), "Role of Genotype in the Cycle of Violence in Maltreated Children." (*Science*, Vol 297, no 5582 pp.851-4.)

¹³ Falkenbach, Diana and Maria Tsoukalas (2011) "Can Adaptive Psychopathic Traits be Observed in Hero Populations" (paper presented to Society for the Scientific Study of Psychopathy Conference, Montreal, Canada, May 2011).

¹⁴ Rubenzer, Steven et al (2014), "Fearless Dominance and the US Presidency: Implications of Psychopathic Personality Traits for Successful and Unsuccessful Political Leadership" (*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*)

¹⁵ Thich Nhat Hanh (1993), "Love in Action: Writings on Nonviolent Social Change" (Parallax Press)