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Character and Destiny

The Making of Good Men and Women

A man's character is his fate.

—*Heraclitus*

Recently, one of my colleagues, an innovative thinker, posed to me the following question: Why do good men and women not act on their destructive dreams and fantasies? As is his habit, my colleague inverted the theme of my book and challenged me to examine the issue from a diametrically opposite position. The question is provocative, but I think it presumes too much—that we don't act at all on our darker impulses. Actually, good men and women manage to keep their dreams and their dark impulses under reasonable control, though not under perfect control. As I have said earlier in this book, there are no saints among us.

Based on my experience as a psychiatrist, I have found that in our lives we live out complex and powerful fantasies about ourselves and the world. Our choice of partners, the work we do, the friends we seek, the possessions we acquire, the way we dress, the cars we drive, all reflect both conscious and unconscious fantasies that we have about ourselves. One of my patients would destroy in a rage possessions of his that he felt were not perfect. He could not abide any aspersions being cast on the image of himself as perfect.

Why good men dream what bad men do is governed by environmental, biological, and genetic factors that carve our character early in life and drive our destiny. We are just beginning to appreciate the

importance of the genetic determinants of behavior. Lionel Dahmer's account of his own murderous dreams provides a chilling hunch that genetics played a significant part in his son Jeffrey's killings. Although we have learned a great deal, our understanding of human behavior is still limited. Much remains shrouded in mystery. A goal of this book is to stimulate a deeper interest in our good and bad behaviors.

As I have observed in earlier chapters, serial sexual killers are relentlessly and compulsively driven to kill by intense sadistic sexual fantasies. Their victims are only the means to a thrilling orgasm. In contrast, the mainstream fantasies of good women and men are life-affirming and generally enabling of others, no matter how dark the tributaries and side streams of their fantasies. Gary Ridgway, Jeffrey Dahmer, Ted Bundy, and other serial sexual killers took the lives of people for their own psychopathically selfish ends. Albert Schweitzer and Mother Teresa dedicated their lives to improve the lot of others—but even Mother Teresa, we now know from her diary and letters, was tormented by doubts and dark thoughts.

Most people who are considered “good” live their lives at various points along a broad spectrum between the extremes of good and bad. All of us, if we remained unsocialized, would act as bad men do—in antisocial ways. Feral children, those who have grown up in the wild, bereft of human warmth and care, behave more like animals than like human beings. That our nature is unregenerate is a tenet of many religions, reflected, for instance, in the concept of original sin. As Job sat on his dung heap, he observed, “Yet man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.”

As a psychiatrist who has sat and listened to patients for more than 45 years, I have been unable to answer the question, “What do people really want?” Beyond the easy generalizations—money, sex, power, and the need to love and be loved—I have discovered that people are immensely complex in ways that have been unforeseeable to me as well as to themselves. What do people really want? I have found in patients the most unimaginable desires, and patients have uncovered needs and conflicts they never imagined.

One could conclude from such discoveries that bad behavior is a fundamental part of our nature. But the ability to dream about bad actions and *not* to act on them is a mental capacity that can be highly developed, although it must be acquired. The achievements of civilization, hard won over the course of centuries, can be destroyed in a

relative instant by a “bad” act, as the world saw with Hitler. Destruction may be truer to our basic nature than “good” acts—a state of affairs recognized by all developed societies, which always need to pass laws and maintain police forces to ensure order.

A benefit of bringing a psychological and medical perspective to the question of why bad men do what good men dream is that this perspective, though narrow in some ways, avoids the pitfall of construing men and women in terms of good and bad and instead refers to mental conditions as psychologically healthy or ill. But even after leaving the analysis of good and evil to philosophy and religion, the psychiatrist must still admit that the concept of mental health itself is elusive. Various professionals in the mental health field define that concept according to their training and theoretical bent. Nevertheless, there is substantial agreement among professionals as to the general aspects of what constitutes good mental health. From my perspective as a psychiatrist, why good men dream but do not translate their antisocial impulses into action, as bad men do, is, in large measure, a function of psychological health.

Sound mental health is inextricably bound to character. As I define *character*, it is a highly individual personality structure that expresses deeply held values and beliefs about oneself, others, and the world. It involves the typical enduring patterns of a person’s functions. We know a person’s character by his or her habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and speaking.

Serious character flaws invariably create psychological problems. Impaired mental health can adversely influence character development. Perfect character, like perfect mental health, is a fiction. “Good enough” character is a more realistic approximation. One’s character is always on display, especially in the little things that we do, or do not do.

Mental Health—What Is It?

Shallow men believe in luck.

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

What constitutes the state of mental health of the hypothetically good man and woman? Over the years, psychiatry has deduced some answers to that question. To begin with, psychologically

healthy persons like and accept themselves. They do not depend excessively on others for approval, nor are they severely wounded by others' criticism. Admiral James Stockdale, the highest-ranking military officer to be held captive during the Vietnam War, observed that many of the American prisoners who survived did not need or seek the approval of their captors. Moreover, a solid, integrated sense of self exists with relatively continuous, reasonably pleasant memories of the past. In psychologically healthy people, the "Who am I?" question arises only infrequently. Neither a grandiose nor a despised self is present. A healthy person does not have to diminish other people to maintain a positive self-view. This person acknowledges and accepts personal shortcomings, and seeks help from others when it is needed. The psychologically healthy person knows that one does not have to be perfect to find self-acceptance.

The healthy person has internalized loving, nurturing parental figures that provide sustenance during times of crisis and inner support at times of failure. This person intrinsically rejects suicide as a solution to life's vicissitudes. In the examples cited in this book, many physically and sexually abused children internalize hostile, sadistic parents and repeat the cycle of abuse with their own children. In both the adults and the children who suffer abuse, memories of the past are painful and often discontinuous.

Another measure of psychological health is the presence of values and standards that throughout life provide the mentally healthy person with a moral rudder. The conscience of the healthy person is firm but fair and adaptive, not harsh and punitive. Absent is any cruel, unbending righteousness; present is a clear but reasonably flexible sense of right and wrong. In the face of human suffering, the healthy person does not insist on compliance with trivial formalities. He or she accepts guilt when it is appropriate without experiencing panic or immobilizing depression. The healthy person's conscience works in harmony with other aspects of the personality. It is not a conscience full of holes that permits the acting out of destructive behaviors that are inconsistent with the person's consciously held value system.

The reader can assess the true nature of his or her own conscience by answering the following question: If you had at your command a genie who could grant you any wish without personal consequences, what would you request? Would your wishes benefit or

harm others? Would antisocial wishes emerge? The point of the question is to help discover to what extent are we guided by inner principles of right and wrong that function relatively independently of external constraints, or to what extent do we need a policeman at our elbow? The true measure of a person's integrity is tested by what he or she would do or not do if there were no possibility of getting caught or punished. At the extremes, we come full circle when we realize that both truly good men and truly bad men are indifferent to external constraints.

The healthy individual's value system emphasizes becoming proficient at one's work while aiming at realistic goals. The healthy person is willing to work hard to achieve success, to learn from failure, and to forge ahead. Debilitating perfectionist standards that guarantee failure are absent. The perfect is the enemy of the good. I have worked with patients who have felt psychologically deprived and hungry because they have pursued pie-in-the-sky goals, unaware of the sumptuous meal present before them. Many of the disturbed individuals described in this book had a deviant, utopian vision, one that required the relentless pursuit of money, possessions, power, sex, and love.

The healthy person values cooperation and collaboration with others, enjoying competition, though not at the expense of humiliating one's competitors or deriving satisfaction if bad things happen to them. As Schopenhauer pointed out, "the worst trait in human nature is *Schadenfreude* [taking pleasure in another's misfortune], for it is closely related to cruelty." Although almost all of us have glimmers of such feelings now and then, for mentally healthy people they usually pass quickly. A mentally healthy person views life not as a dog-eat-dog struggle but as a positive challenge. By contrast, the psychopath has no moral core and acts at all times in accordance with maximizing his or her pleasure. To the psychopath, the damaging of others is of no consequence.

Healthy and nonhealthy people can be determined by their relationships. Psychologically healthy people enjoy their relationships with others. They place appropriate trust in others as well as themselves acting in a trustworthy manner. They are empathetic toward others, accepting those who manifest conflicts and problems similar to their own. Support and empowerment of friends and acquaintances is their hallmark. They curb feelings of envy and jealousy in def-

erence to the importance of maintaining relationships. They do not desire domination of others. By contrast, most rapists and all serial killers are power-mad in the extreme. They use people as objects for their selfish purposes; the serial sexual killer, for instance, kills for the sole purpose of having a thrilling orgasm. The healthy person esteems other individuals in their own right and appreciates that we all must bear the vicissitudes of the human condition. He or she seeks no personal advantage. Indeed, while healthy people pursue their own self-interests, they do so with empathetic regard to the consequences that these actions might have on others.

The psychologically healthy person maintains good personal boundaries, knowing where he or she stops and another individual begins. The erotomaniac stalker has lost personal boundaries, fusing with the object of his or her erotic delusion. A total self-absorption and disregard for others is the sign of the psychopath, and, in my opinion, the origin of what much of the world calls evil. Pathological self-centeredness is roughly equivalent to Christianity's pride, one of humankind's chief sins and greatest evils. In the chapter on sexual misconduct of professionals, persons in positions of power and trust can abuse their standing to exploit others for their own gratification. The healthy person does not do this. He or she feels regret or guilt if others are unnecessarily harmed by his or her own actions, and if they are, the healthy person makes efforts at reparation. The ability to feel remorse, sadness, regret, and guilt in appropriate measure is based on toleration and acknowledgment of our own failings. The healthy person does not shift blame to others, as we find with some of the workplace killers. The person with good character makes liberal use of two phrases in nurturing her or his relationships: "I am sorry" and "Thank you." It is amazing how difficult it is for some people to apologize and to express appreciation.

Psychologically healthy persons are able to accept the darker side of their humanness—their conflicts, their unbridled desires, and even their antisocial impulses—without undue emotional distress. An essential quality of being human is the ability to fantasize. Animals do not have this capacity. Good men and women are able to contain antisocial impulses within fantasy, exercising the option to act or to continue dreaming. Bad men and women, like young children, live in the present and act for the moment. The mature person can enjoy childish pleasures, but at the appropriate time and within measure.

A strong indicator of emotional health is the ability to withstand anxiety that arises from internal or external conflict without falling apart or launching into drastic action. During a crisis, our internalized loving family relationships sustain us. Those persons who have experienced hate and rejection from their caretakers find that in a crisis, these abusive relationships emerge to once again tear at their hearts and minds. They feel abandoned in the present as they were in the past. Some of the mass murderers described in the chapter on workplace violence were unable to contain and control their feelings of anger and vengeance without descending into a lethal paranoid depression. The ability to delay gratification and to tolerate frustration, when appropriate, is a critical developmental step that is accomplished by the psychologically healthy person. Primitive, unsocialized personalities cannot perform this fundamental psychological delaying action. A sure sign of psychological dysfunction is the inability to defer gratification without becoming angry, anxious, or depressed. When frustrations arise, the less than healthy person uses others as “whipping boys.” Critical to health is the ability to think before acting and to modulate impulses in the way that one adjusts the volume control on a television set.

The capacity to sublimate—that is, to transform and redirect basic impulses deriving from sexuality and aggression toward higher goals—speaks of mental health. The abilities to compete, to succeed against odds, and to be a winner all borrow energy from redirected aggression. Rechanneled sexual energy may find expression in music, art, and literary creativity.

The psychologically healthy person is able to love—that is, to value and care for another person beyond oneself. Love nurtures the independence and growth of others. The ability to love another person has nothing to do with Hollywood’s version of love. The lovers whose moonlight gazes sparkle on the silver screen mirror only the illusion of each other’s perfection. We are all imperfect. To love someone requires that we first accept ourselves, despite our weaknesses and foibles. To truly commit to another person, we must first authentically value ourselves. Perfectionists cannot do that and often end up hating themselves. When we acknowledge our dark side, we take our first transcendent steps toward discovering the miracle of love.

In the chapter on stalking, I described individuals who terrorized former partners out of feelings of rage, vengeance, and the inability

to emotionally let go of the former partner. In the healthy person, feelings of jealousy, anger, hate, and rejection are tempered by an overriding concern for the person who is loved. The most difficult relationships are with the people whom we love, not those we unequivocally hate. We may hate a Hitler or a Ted Bundy, but it is not the same as simultaneously hating someone we love. Except when hate feelings are overwhelming, love usually softens the conflict to a tolerable level. The ability to preserve our relationships amidst such contrary feelings is a hallmark of psychological health.

Sex for the healthy person is not merely a spasm of physiological release or just another form of masturbation. If sexuality enters the healthy person's relationship, it does so in an empowering way, through a mutually loving, physical, and mental exploration of one another. In searching for a mate, the emphasis is less on finding the right person than on being the right person.

Healthy people have many satisfying facets to their lives. They work to make a living, but work is not the only source of satisfaction for them. Work is a source of creative emotional growth and mental refreshment rather than a primary way of obtaining or maintaining self-esteem. I have treated patients undergoing serious personal crises whose positive work experience helped sustain them through a very difficult time. Professional goals are folded into a broader fabric of life that is rich in sustaining relationships, recreation, hobbies, and spiritual quests. The healthy person is capable of experiencing awe, joy, and wonder about the world, finding a sense of fulfillment in a life not beset by regret or bitterness.

A firm commitment to relationships and to work or professional goals enriches the mentally healthy person. Money, though important, pales in comparison to these commitments. Money is a means to an end but not an end in itself. Money has extrinsic value; that is, what it can buy. Problems arise when money is sought for its intrinsic value, for example, as an important source of self-esteem. Joy is felt with the "small" things in life: a sunset, the smell of a spring, a sense of awe about the world, a moment with a friend, morning's first light. The ability to laugh and cry, to have one's feelings available, is a distinct sign of mental health. One of my depressed patients put it well when she anguished, "I would just like to *be!*" Emily Dickinson wrote, "To live is so startling it leaves time for little else."

It's the Little Things...

The man who has not conscience in small things
will be a scoundrel in big things.

—*Arthur Schopenhauer*

People often throw away their hard-won careers, their families, and their lives over some small thing, a trivial matter. Persons in positions of great trust and power betray the most sacred trust placed in them, often for a peccadillo, or 30 pieces of silver—and in full knowledge that if they are caught, dishonor and disgrace will follow. This is an affliction of all humankind, not just of prominent persons.

Why do we cross the line? The better question is, why doesn't it happen to all of us much more than it does? For most people, gross antisocial behaviors are inhibited by the policeman at the elbow. But although they believe that major breaches will be discovered, they also feel that minor transgressions will go unnoticed. The psychiatrist knows that character can be best discerned in such "little things," which reflect serious character flaws just as major transgressions do. Character is what we display when we think no one is watching.

Yet no one can escape the consequences of character. Emerson stated that "All infractions of love and equity in our social relations are speedily punished." As a psychiatrist, I hold that the "punishment" is instantaneous, even though the person may be unaware of it, because at the moment of the infraction, destructive character traits are reinforced that further ensnare one in a troubled destiny. Thus, some of us, when reacting to the slings and arrows of everyday life, find that exacting revenge on an individual for hurts we have suffered is superfluous, because punishment of the offender is instantaneous, an inevitable consequence of his or her character and destiny. In other instances, we may need to call the police, file a lawsuit, or go to war. The progression is summed up in an anonymously written verse:

Sow a thought, and you reap an act;
Sow an act, and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit, and you reap character;
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.

Character, Perceiving Reality, and Accepting Limitations

Reality is perceived reasonably clearly by the psychologically healthy person. Personal needs and conflicts do not usually interfere with a reasonably accurate perception of the world. The reality principle is harmoniously melded with the pleasure principle. For the most part, the healthy person confronts the threat of internal and external dangers and only denies them when it becomes necessary for survival, say, in an acute crisis or emergency. Anger has a realistic place in the person's palette of feelings and is expressed in an appropriate, adaptive manner. But no person totally leaves behind his or her childish feelings of complete self-absorption, of the rageful intolerance to frustration, of the insistent need for the immediate gratification of all wishes. Some of life's comedy and much of its tragedy arises when infantile strivings clash with reality.

From my perspective as a psychiatrist, I know that individuals who can accept that they have emotional problems that go beyond their ability to cope, and who seek professional help for them, can achieve a significant measure of maturity and mental health. The Dahmers, Bundys, and Kempers never think of obtaining help. Their deviant acts and fantasies provide them with too much pleasure. Both Dahmer and Kemper received court-ordered treatment for earlier offenses but obviously did not obtain any benefit, since they went on to commit many murders based on their horrific fantasies.

One of the measures of a parent's success at the child-rearing task is that his or her children recognize their limitations and know that it is reasonable to ask for help from others when necessary. The ability to depend on others should not be confused with a pathological state of dependency. On the other hand, rigid independence is as emotionally limiting as an intractable dependence on others.

Psychological treatments aimed at developing insight into our darker side are not meant for everyone. Analyzing our actions before rushing to critically judge ourselves is a responsible course—but difficult for many people. For example, I have treated patients whose harsh self-criticism, though very painful, was easier for them to bear than facing their dreaded inner demons. Often with such patients, the therapy was unsuccessful. A prickly conscience provided excellent cover against self-discovery.

Insight psychotherapy is just one of many therapies available. Currently, there are over 450 different psychotherapies that individuals can choose from. Psychotherapies have been scientifically proven to be effective.

The purpose of insight psychotherapy is to identify conflicts and develop new ways of coping and resolving problems. When successful, it frees the individual from being stuck with automatic, reflexive reactions to life's stresses. A fundamental tenet of insight therapy holds that, in general, the more realistic a person's perception of oneself and the world, the more harmonious that person's adaptation to life. When a person has experienced an important insight, she or he is never the same. However, much depends on how the person uses the insight, if it is used at all. One patient analogized the psychotherapeutic process to a worm that enters a cocoon, and, in time, emerges as a beautiful butterfly that flies away free. Another patient, an intractable curmudgeon, used the same metaphor to insist that his transformation process in therapy was from a worm to an ugly moth with a flame fixation. Individuals who respond favorably to insight therapy are able to replace reflexive responses by choices. Also, positive changes in character structure generally improve prospects for a more inner-driven destiny.

The list of attributes of the hypothetical healthy person could go on and on, but ultimately any such list must end with the succinct summation about mental health once made by William Sloane Coffin, former Chaplain of Yale University, who said, "I'm not okay, you're not okay, and that's okay." Perfect mental health is a fiction. It is also undesirable and downright inhuman. Mental health and illness exist on a continuum, and in delicate, dynamic balance—and perfection is entirely off the scale. Much depends on the context. A noise that barely catches our attention in the morning after a good night's sleep can, later that evening, when we are tired, frighten us terribly.

Born Unto Trouble

As can be readily appreciated, much hard work, sustained effort, and loving care go into raising good women and men. Socialization and character appear to develop best within an intact family providing *good enough* care, preferably with both parents present. In many instances, good parenting can overcome or inhibit inherited antisocial

tendencies. In others, the best parenting and family situation available may not be sufficient to control innate destructive behaviors, particularly if alcohol and drug abuse are involved. So even under optimal circumstances, parenthood is an impossible task. There are neither perfect parents nor perfect children.

Many of the mentally healthy attributes previously described play a role in the fashioning of sound character. No one can go beyond his or her character. In many ways, our character foretells our future. In this sense, character is destiny—who we marry, if we marry, our relationships, what sort of work we do, how we live, who we are, whether we are good or bad. Obviously, many things happen in life over which we have no control. But how we respond, whether adaptively or dysfunctionally, is directly related to our character. The murderers, rapists, and psychopaths in this book represent the end stage of character development gone awry. The answer to prevention of antisocial behavior does not reside in adding more police and building more jails. These solutions can only address the end-stage problem, which, of course, is still important. But effective prevention will occur only when society undertakes to provide and protect those elements that foster the development and continuity of stable, caring families.

It is also quite clear that the bad men and women depicted in this book failed miserably in the areas of character, conscience, impulse control, reality testing, and interpersonal relationships. Compared with people with the hypothetically “normal” character profile, these bad men and women are riddled with debilitating emotional and mental deficiencies. When a psychiatrist has the opportunity to examine these persons, their severe psychological conflicts and developmental problems are displayed in excruciating detail. They hardly are the stuff for even the lowest grade of Hollywood movie.

Why bad men do what good men dream is explained to a certain degree when one has the opportunity to psychiatrically examine antisocial persons. But the answer to the good men–bad men conundrum must go beyond psychiatric examination. Even when the psychiatrist has been able to spot glaring psychological conflicts and deficiencies that led to a destructive act, the origins of these dysfunctions often remain obscure. The need for certainty where none is possible unrealistically places unfounded reliance on psychological theories. We are all born with a darker side. Good men—for reasons only some of which are known—are able to contain that dark side. Bad men live it.

Empathy

Taught by time, my heart has learned to glow
for other's good, and melt at other's woe.

—Homer

One difference between bad and good people may have to do with empathy. This is a core character trait that enables us to understand our fellow human beings and to feel compassion. It has something to do with an anatomical structure that has been found in monkey brains and human brains, called mirror neurons. The cells are located in the brain's motor cortex, where muscle movement and control are initiated. The mirror neuron circuitry allows us to step into the shoes of others, to feel their pain. The more empathetic the person, the stronger is their mirror neuron response. Although science has discovered this neuronal basis for empathy, it can only be a foundation upon which personal experiences of love and caring build. Adverse life experiences can interfere with or disable the functioning of mirror neurons. Psychopaths, for instance, do not feel empathy. Presumably their mirror response is very weak or nonexistent.

The lack of empathy may be an important reason why psychopaths are untreatable. In previous chapters that have analyzed all sorts of "bad men," from serial killers to heads of state, we have seen how spectacular failures in empathy drive the engines of evil.

For psychotherapists and other providers of health services to be effective, they must be empathetic. But excessive empathy may cause these providers to live too much in another's shoes, and thus share the patient's destiny. To be truly effective, the healthcare provider must also be able to step *out* of those shoes.

Empathy allows us to feel the pain of others, but also to experience their joy. As such, empathy can combat envy, a pernicious character flaw that can destroy relationships and make life miserable for everyone.

Are We Hard-Wired for Trouble?

What causes our destructive behaviors? Is it genetics, one's family of origin, terrible experiences, bad brain chemistry, or all of these? Have our brains been hard-wired through the evolutionary process

for inevitable trouble? Is dysfunctional behavior attributable to factors that are beyond our control? And how much of good mental health is the blind luck of the draw? For example, what does the future hold for children who are born addicted to cocaine and whose mothers are teenaged and unwed? What opportunities will these children have to learn how to channel or control their antisocial impulses?

What we do know is that the brain of every individual—his or her “computer hardware”—is genetically distinct from all others. The human genome (an organism’s complete set of DNA) contains 3.1 billion DNA pairs. The opportunities for genetic aberrations are great. J.D. Watson, the codiscoverer of the double helix structure of DNA, observed, “We used to think our fate was in our stars. Now we know, in large measure, our fate is in our genes.” Adding yet another level of complexity, environmental and other factors may also influence the gene expression. As in a computer, the brain’s capacity to process information correctly and to adequately perform various complex psychological tasks depends on the circuitry. It is estimated that the human brain contains approximately 30 billion neurons that have 100 trillion interconnections. Into this “hardware” goes important “software”—for instance, the individual’s personal experiences with caregivers and with the world in general. The possible combinations of a person’s unique hardware with the permutations of this software are infinite. We know this because even identical twins with identical brain hardware and the same parents have different software experiences. These twins appear identical on the surface, but their characters are not identical. Suffice it to say that malfunctions in either or both modalities, hardware and software, are what lead to psychological limitations and to trouble. With all this genetic and neuronal complexity, it is incredible that most of us come out reasonably whole.

Good computer hardware combined with good software allows good men to dream. But again there are no perfect computers, and there is no perfect software. In fact, even apart from our inherent limitations as human beings, there are too many places for things to go wrong, to even contemplate the possibility of a hypothetically “normal” person who has all of the attributes described in this chapter. Our dark side is a fundamental part of our personality—of our brain-computer hardware. In so many instances, it is the software of our personal expe-

riences with our parents, family, and the world that fashions our character and our destiny. Many of the persons depicted in this book were destined for trouble by aberrations in both their brain-computer hardware and their software experiences. Many of us may escape a similar harsh fate because we have either good enough hardware or good enough software, but not necessarily both. For the troubled, modern psychiatry has developed a wide variety of beneficial treatments for mental disorders, which can help substantially in controlling destructive, antisocial ideas and impulses.

Fortunately, the majority of humankind does tolerably well in rising above the inherent limitations that we have as human beings. I find it truly remarkable that we have so many good people in this world, even if they are all limited in their goodness. Although, as Job says, we are all born unto trouble, we are not condemned to miserable lives. Good people are able to dream and to contain the impulses that bad people act out. Taming our demons and acknowledging our humanity with its attendant dark side can be empowering. Those who become psychologically resourceful may be able to put the demons to useful work, in the same way as humankind has learned how to tame and use fire, though the sparks inevitably fly upward. It is the essence of the human condition that we struggle against our dark demons, that our spirit strives to harness these demons in the pursuit and the fulfillment of our human destiny.