

Immaturity and Maturity By Dr Margaret Lowenfeld

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(Report of the first of a series of eight lectures on “Some Problems of Adolescence” delivered at the Friends House, Euston Road, N.W. on Wednesdays beginning November 6th, 1935, two lectures being delivered each Wednesday.)

The Rt. Hon. Lord Northbourne (President of the Institute of Child Psychology) in outlining the object of the series, said: I take it all who are present this evening are here because they have some kind of interest in and, possibly, some direct responsibility for the training, bringing up or teaching of some young person or persons. I wonder how many have thought carefully what their real aim is in that training. Probably we all feel now that the training of the young, in which I include everything from the earliest nursery days to the passing of School Certificate or any other examination, that the whole of that training is, somehow, a little out of date, if not worse than that, rather decayed and lacking altogether any freshness of outlook. Many must have felt that the foundations of our training of the young or those of our ancestors – we may prefer to put the blame on them – may be, in some degree, responsible for the very curious and difficult state of affairs in the world to-day. In any case, even if we do not think that, we probably all agree that the generation to come must be equipped with a greater flexibility, broadness of outlook, more power of directing their faculties along lines which are not carefully prepared for them beforehand; they must, in fact, be capable of imagination.

So we need something new and we have somehow to re-build our ideals on a sound foundation. The question is what that foundation is to be. Probably all here will agree that we shall not take as a foundation that kind of subordination of every freedom of idea to a political idea, which is so much in evidence in the world to-day. We want something other than that, and we believe this country is the place where there is the best opportunity of developing that kind of freedom of idea. So we must build not on preconceived political notions but, to continue the metaphor, in the same way that a sound builder does, on knowledge of our material, the material in this instance being the young people of the next generation. For that purpose we must study our material, and one of the main objects of the Institute of Child Psychology is to study that material. One of the soundest ways in which to arrive at an understanding of the psychology of the young is to study those cases in which there is bad adaptation to environment. By realising the lack of adaptation it is often possible to arrive at some generalization as to what constitutes good adaptation. Therefore, the study of maladjustment is essential. Further, we must learn how to treat it and it must then be treated, of course, for its own sake. If we meet with success in our treatment it may lead us to believe that our premises are right, and we must devise means for spreading the idea which we may have formed. That is why the Institute of Child Psychology has really a threefold function: Research, Treatment and Training. Research into the cause and nature of maladjustments; treatment of those maladjustments, which involves the treatment of individual children, and the training of others, teachers, workers and so forth, to go out and use their knowledge elsewhere.

At the same time, whatever is done will not be of any use unless the investigation covers every possible aspect of the maladjustment. It is no use considering only the psychological

side or only the medicine side. It is very much the aim of the Institute to study together all three possible causes of maladjustment and to relate them together and treat them accordingly: to keep such full record of everything that emerges from these investigations that the results shall be available as a real reserve of scientific knowledge on which to base any general theory. That may sound rather ambitious. I think it is. But what is the use of being otherwise? The only thing that the Institute has hitherto had to do has been to carry out this programme on rather a small scale. We hope very much that in due time the scale on which it is able to work will be extended. It is almost impossible to extend the range of its interest.

The object of this series of lectures is twofold: first, that those who attend should have the opportunity of hearing what the views of the Institute, in some directions, are, and should thereby continuity of interest in its work. Secondly, there is the direct need of making a little money. The Directors and others who are giving the lectures are doing so absolutely and entirely for the sake of the Institute and because of their profound belief in the value of the work it is doing and their great desire to extend that work.

Dr. Lowenfeld, as you know, is Psychological Director of the Institute of Child Psychology and, occupying that position, she has unique opportunity for the collection of material. As to her power of putting it into order and placing it before you, I will leave to judge.

Dr. Margaret Lowenfeld then delivered her lecture as follows: Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, - In this course of lectures we are going to consider one of the most interesting and, at the same time, one of the most puzzling periods of human life; that is to say, the period between childhood and maturity, or adult-hood. In certain parts of Scotland there is in use a very neat technical term for this period, and I wish we had one as apt in England. They call a person at such a stage a "halfing", indicating that he has left school and has not yet come to the age of earning a full salary; it is people who are still between the period when they are entirely under the direction of someone else for the larger part of their time and the period when they have to take their whole life into their own hands that we are going to consider; that is, the adolescent period.

Before we can cope with the subject at all, it is necessary to consider very seriously and carefully some of the fundamental questions with regard to maturity and immaturity. It is a curious fact that in spite of the immense amount of work that has during recent years been done by the varied schools of psychology, philosophy and very many other forms of thought, political and otherwise, the question of what is a man, what is a woman, considered as a whole in contrast to the child or the underdeveloped person, has received practically no attention. What I am about to say is the result of my own personal thinking about this very perplexing problem, together with the results drawn from studied of the failure to mature, and I hope that during the discussion we shall be able to see whether I have succeeded in any way in raising in your minds problems that seem to me to be so very urgent in connection with the conduct of our public affairs in relation to the concept of maturity.

Does Wisdom automatically ripen with years?

The generally accepted view is that if a man or woman grow old in years they grow automatically, at the same time, ripe in wisdom. If you consider that for a moment you will

realize that some of the older civilizations, such as the Chinese, are based upon that as such a self-evident fact that one would never dream of questioning it. The old are wise. How often does one not hear the older generation say to the younger: "But, my dear, how absurd! You are only 15; how can you know anything about this? I am much older and I ought to be able to tell you. I know."

The belief that age in itself – and by age I mean merely a period of years that a given organism has stayed alive on this planet – means wisdom really rests upon two other tenets, and these other tenets, when we think just ordinarily, we also say are self-evident. I hope to be able to show that not only are they not self-evident but that they are a manifest absurdity. But let us start from the fact that they do appear to be quite obviously true.

The first tenet is that there is an automatic combination between growth of body and mind. For the first few years of life that is true. The work of Dr. Charlotte Bühler of Vienna has shown very interestingly that there is a certain amount of maturation of personality, which varies in the normal individual with the actual passage of time; that the two-year-old child, provided it is normal, can be expected to exhibit this and this range of performances, ideas and capacities; the three-year-old child something else, and so on. So that Dr. Bühler is able at certain stages to call a child out and say, beforehand. "I am going to call a three-year-old child, give it this material and it will do" whatever it may be. "I will now call a six-year-old child, give it the same material and it will do" so and so with it. Provided that the child is normal, provided that the basis of the whole of its desires is sound, in all probability those predictions will be fulfilled. So that intelligence tests and what is known as the intelligence quotient or mental age are based upon the idea that up to a certain point in life length upon time upon this earth does mean a certain level of development in the normal. If an individual is two or three years behind that development, we can say that he or she is definitely mentally retarded. A curious and interesting fact to which we do not, I think, pay nearly sufficient attention – I am not at all sure whether it is now accepted by all schools of thought – is that 16 is taken to be the age at which intellectual growth in the ordinary average individual stops, so that when you test an adult and that adult comes out of the 16-year-old level you say: "This is an individual with normal intelligence."

There are two important factors: bodily growth and intellectual growth. Everybody can see that a human being grows from a baby to adult stature and when adult stature is reached the individual stays adult; nothing happens; he does not go backwards. As a matter of course, he declines in vigour at the end of his years but he remains as he was when he was 22 or 23 years of age. It is definitely now held that something of the same kind happens to intelligence: that our intelligence grows up to a certain point and then while it deepens and widens in grasp, while it develops and becomes more subtle in certain ways, its actual calibre does not alter, does not add to itself powers which were not there before.

When we say that a human being who has become physically adult has also become wise what do we tend to think of his intelligence? I want to put to you as a primary point in connection with what we are going to study during the next four weeks, that the intelligence plays a very small part, proportionately, in the determining of maturity, and that maturity is an emotional situation and only secondarily an intellectual one. When it comes to the question of emotional growth we find the text-books completely silent. There have not been devised any tests for emotional growth or emotional maturity. At the Institute of

Child Psychology we are deeply interested in this subject, and we hope before many years are out to be able to put before you the beginning of some tests in this connection. At present the question of emotional growth is one upon which all psychologists are silent.

So that the first tenet that we have, as I say, accepted in regard to a human being's length of time on earth, implies maturity. When we come to think about it more closely we note that we have quite clear conceptions about physical growth and maturity; certain conceptions about intellectual growth maturity, and that there is a kind of No Man's Land in our minds when we come to consider the question of emotional growth and maturity.

The second tenet upon which this concept is based is equally strange when examined critically. When anyone says: "I am a grown-up citizen. I have lived many years; I have travelled round the world, surely I know more about this than you do; you listen to your elders" what that individual is actually saying in effect is: I have done or seen or been involved in a certain number of experiences a fairly large number of times. Therefore, I understand those experiences better than you who are meeting them for the first or second time. That is to say, there is a tacit assumption that a repetition of an experience increases understanding of it. Please let us be very careful about this because it is a fundamental point in the understanding, as far as I can see it, of the nature of human emotional growth.

We here are drawing an unconscious analogy from the practical life. In the practical life we know that to be a truth. We know that the way to achieve facility, maturity and success in any practical undertaking is by practice. Why do we have athletics coaches? Why do we have any kinds of training? Why do we have an apprenticeship system? Why any of these graduated performances that make an individual do the same action over and over again if it were not that practice makes perfect, that doing things in a critical spirit and under proper training often increases ability to do them correctly?

From that evident and quite undeniable practical fact we move to the emotional sphere and we say: I have been there so often; I have done that so often; I have been involved in it so often, obviously I must understand it better. If it were true that merely being assisté, as the French say, or having assisted at a reasonable number of events helps one to understand them, then naturally the individual who has remained longest on this earth and has been involved in a greater variety of circumstances is the wisest man alive.

Those are the two tenets which I wish to examine.

It is strange that although the whole of our social structure depends upon these two assumptions, I have been unable to discover any critical consideration of them. The East depends very much more than the West upon the veneration for age, but in the West also we feel instinctively that an older Parliamentarian, an older physician, an old doctor or whoever he may be, is going to be better able to guide us than a younger man. In order to examine these concepts let us try to consider what we mean by maturity.

What is Maturity?

I suggest that a mature individual, a wise individual, someone we feel is to be trusted in the conduct of affairs, whether national or individual affairs, has the following characteristics. I hope you will consider them carefully because if you feel that I am entirely untrue or that

there is something vital I have left out, it is going to add enormously to our enjoyment of this course and to its soundness, if afterwards you will tell me so. I do not name the characteristics or qualities in order of importance, because I think we are all much too young corporately to know which are going to be the most important. I name them in the order in which I wish to discuss them.

I would put as the first characteristic of a person we feel is to be trusted in the conduct of affairs that such a person is not deceived by the appearance of things; that the wise person does not assume that naturally and obviously a thing is what it appears to be.

Secondly, a wise person knows beforehand how a good many of life's events will turn out, because that wise person has absorbed his experience of similar events beforehand. He can therefore say: "I would not go into that business if I were you; it is not going to turn out well." As we are many of us thinking to-day, whichever party we belong to, theoretically that is quite a good tenet for social life, but from my experience in affairs I do not think it is wise to bring it into operation at this minute. What that man is saying is, that if you brought it into operation at this minute the effect would be very different from what you would expect it to be. That is to say, that the individual can, to a certain extent and in certain circumstances, forecast what is liable to happen, and forecast it correctly.

The third characteristic is that one is not driven by gusts of one's own enthusiasm and emotions. The difference in that connection, it seems to me, between youth and maturity is that youthful persons have their lives moved by their own emotional attitudes: they like a certain person; they like a certain notion, therefore they are predisposed to judge kindly. They dislike other people and, therefore, they are predisposed to judge harshly. We all do that, to a certain extent; a very wise man hardly exists, but the youthful person is driven entirely by the gusts of his enthusiasms and emotions; his judgement of affairs is subordinated to his emotional feeling about the elements in the affair.

The fourth characteristic is that the mature person is sensitive to the deeper notes of human experience and is able to appreciate a complexity of situations. One of the factors, it seems to me, which separates maturity from immaturity is that the immature person sees everything in very simple terms, whereas the mature person is able to see that there is nothing simple on this earth; nothing simple connected with human beings and human affairs, and such a person is efficient and wise concerning the complexity of human behaviour and human feeling.

Fifthly, there is the capacity to be able to sympathise with others without agreeing with them or allowing one's own sympathy to weaken one's own point of view. The wise man or woman is able to see the other person's point of view, is able to be sympathetic to the reasons that make the other person feel as he does, without having that sympathy pulled over to identification with the other person's point of view: the other person remains the other person and you remain just as opposed to his point of view but, at the same time, you are able to see why that person has that point of view and to feel sympathetic towards him.

Lastly, I cite the characteristic that the mature person is very rarely trapped into an a priori judgement about anything. The mature person very rarely, unless combining with his maturity a very rare degree of intuition, is ready to stake upon an immediate judgement of

men and affairs because a mature person knows, first of all, that there is no such thing as a simple issue; secondly, the mature person knows that his own mind, and his own emotions – he knows this through real experience – at each stage carries a trap, and that it is unwise to commit himself to any immediate judgement without having allowed time for the question to mature in his own mind.

Is Maturity Automatic?

Well, now, taking those characteristics as indicating what we mean, not necessarily as comprising a complete degree in maturity but as, anyway, the kind of thing we mean by maturity, how do these qualities come about? Do they come about automatically? The existence of a very large number of foolish grown-up people makes us answer: No, they cannot come about automatically. We all of us know certain very wise young folk, also a great many foolish ones; we also know a certain number of very wise grown-ups and also a great number of foolish ones. Therefore, this cannot be a process that just happens like our growth in stature. It must be in some way a determined process. It must depend upon something. There must be some reason why one person is foolish in later life and another not. How does this come about?

Let us take, first, our second tenet: that if you do a thing a great many times you come to understand it better. It is perfectly clear, is it not, that that is not true. When one comes to think over the judgements of a large number of people one sees that any number of people go on making the same mistakes right through their lives. If you have any really wise experience of people you will see, for example, that the Mr. Micawbers misjudge the circumstances of life. If you read the newspapers carefully you will see that incredible and most interesting fact that something running into hundreds of thousands of pounds are made yearly by confidence tricksters; that, in spite of the fact that every detail of a difficult confidence trick is published many times and you would have thought everyone knew all there was to be known about it, there is always a rich harvest of people who fall into it. Many of these people are businessmen who in their lives often meet business tricksters. It is the commonest thing in the world to find people continually making the same mistakes. So that not only does it not work automatically that if you are in a circumstance two or three times you understand it better, but it does not even work automatically that when you have made a failure a certain number of times, you will necessarily succeed next time. The more often many people come into certain circumstances the more certain is it that they will make a failure. So that better understanding does not happen automatically.

Another interesting point is that growth in emotions does not seem to have anything much to do with intellect. Those who have had what I regard as the supreme privilege of intimate contact with simple people will know that many and many a time the simple unlettered person has a far truer insight into men and affairs than the College professor. When people ask me where I learned my psychology one of the replies I always love to make, because it is so profoundly true, is that I learned a great deal of it from a certain Mrs. Macalister who lived in Douglas Street, Glasgow, a street in one of the slum areas on Clydeside. Mrs. Macalister was a riveter's wife; she had seven children and her husband had been in work as the only member of the family, five sons being out of work. She had "two-and-a-bit rooms."

I happened to be visiting her because the children were attending the Rheumatic Clinic that we were running at the hospital in Glasgow. I went first in the ordinary course of

investigation and I was so attracted by some of the things that Mrs. Macalister said about life and affairs that I always used to forget to do something at that particular house, I forgot to collect one or other piece of data, in order to have an excuse to go back and exchange a few words with her again. There were a good many families in the same street and we got to talking about the neighbours. I happened to be visiting them because we were doing a very intensive piece of investigation for the Medical Research Council. I began to take it as an interesting exercise to form my own opinions of the various families up and down the street and then ask Mrs. Macalister what she thought about them. I was again and again amazed at her insight, at her wisdom, and her judgement. The same is true of shepherd and country people; many and many a man and woman up and down this country, who have not had their natural intuitions befogged by having book learning hammered into them. I have no means of telling, supposing I had put Mrs. Macalister through an intelligence test, how she would have come out; I do not think there would be any means of knowing. But one of the stupidest occasions I have ever had to cope with was the discussion of a very simple emotional problem with a man known for his brilliant classical research. Being entirely ignorant of the classics, I have no means of judging, but I do know that he is accepted as being a very brilliant person in his own line, though he is just about as able to understand an emotional situation or to be wise about the motives of the people concerned in it as an 8 or 9-year-old child. He was prepared to accept everything at its face value. He was prepared to believe everything that every one of the protagonists said to him. He was perfectly fogged by the possibility that there might be such a thing as emotional blocking. When I suggested that one of the people concerned was probably not telling the truth, he looked at me, took off his glasses and said: "You mean to tell me that you think So-and-so is lying?" I sighed and started at the beginning again. I said: "You know, people do not always see correctly" and he said: "I don't understand what you mean." There we were going round again in regard to what seemed to me a matter of perfectly simple fact: either A or B was right, and as in both cases they had been struggling for a very long time to cope with interior stresses and strains which were making them behave irrationally I had no means of explaining that neither A nor B was right. A situation of that kind my friend Mrs. Macalister would have understood far better than I could have explained it to her. So that this process is independent of the training of the mind, as it is independent of the growth of the body, and you might ask: Well, what on earth is it?

The Morphology of Emotional Growth

First, it is a matter which concerns the relationship of the individual to himself. It does not concern very much the relationship of the outside world to the individual. You can give a person physical exercise to train his body; you can give him mental exercise to train his mind. We have not yet devised a means of giving him emotional exercise to train his emotions; the training of his emotions, the training of his whole interior emotional self, comes from himself. It comes from himself in this way: every child comes into the world with certain natural instinctive drives. They are balanced differently in different children but every child is faced with the same problem. There are all sorts of things inside himself that he wants, and those wants are going to come into conflict with the outside world. If you watch plants you will see that every plant has to go through certain stages. You cannot get a finished rose off a sapling. You cannot get a pear off a tree that has just started growing. The pear-tree and the rose-tree have to go through certain perfectly well-defined stages before they arrive at the point at which the pear or rose is possible. It is not that the tree

does not want to bear fruit or that it is bad or that it is not responding to treatment and soil. It is that until that tree has reached a certain stage it cannot produce fruit.

The same is true in regard to emotional growth. Emotional growth has a morphology; it has a form of development just as trees and plants have a morphology. It starts one shape; it goes through certain other stages and neither the fruits of maturity which I have outlined or any other fruits of maturity can come, in the absolute sense, from an individual until the other stages have been passed through. It just cannot be done. These stages cannot be skipped. there is no means of skipping them. They can be shortened by certain influences, by certain processes, by certain effects. Emotional growth, which normally takes twenty years, can be telescoped into six months but in that telescoping each stage is there to be seen. The stages cannot be skipped. We live in a universe of law. We do not live in a universe of caprice. These stages have to follow each other in the way that they were set down by whatever force it was that started to organize the world. They have to be followed out in the same stages. If only people generally and educators particularly would realize that fact, about half of all the difficulties of education would disappear. Nobody tries to teach a child logarithms before it has learned to add and subtract. Any teacher who tried so to do would be regarded as a lunatic, and yet we every day expect from our children the fruits of maturity when we have given them no opportunity whatever to pass through stages which lead towards the possibility of maturity.

Then if you look at a pruned fruit or rose tree, particularly in the early spring, you will note that their appearance is often not very comely. Many of the stages of morphological growth of vegetation are not beautiful; they are positively hideous; on the other hand, the flower or fruit are impossible without them. The same is true of emotional growth. There are stages in emotional growth that are not beautiful. There are stages which individuals have to pass through in order to reach the stages at which maturity is possible, stages of stunted appearance, odd and out of order, in no way harmonious and perfect. If civilization demands from the individual a perfect and smooth outside at all stages the inevitable result is that the part of the personality which should at that moment begin to expand becomes stunted. It is a vast subject, extraordinarily difficult to cover in so short a course, but I should like later to give some examples of how certain civilizations provide, as for example our country provides, most exceptional and wise and beautiful scaffolding for the growth of certain qualities: the qualities which are concerned with leadership, the qualities concerned with cooperation, with magnanimity, with outward impassivity under strain. All these particular aspects of the personality Great Britain has for generation after generation concentrated her unconscious thinking upon and has produced the most perfect system of training the world has ever seen, but by the very perfection in those lines there has been left out of account altogether the vast areas of the human personality which are concerned with the sexual emotions, which are concerned with the international emotions and relationships, with toleration, sympathy for the other point of view with which one may not agree; concerned with art, concerned with quite as large an area of the total human personality as the area that we cultivate. On the other hand, France has arranged for an exceptionally well integrated and perfect system of training for the artistic side of man's nature. In France an artist finds himself supported by a tradition, by a society; he knows where he is; he has immediate discipline; the same kind of discipline as the colonial governor has immediately and instinctively in the British Constitution. There is a book by Señor Madariaga which I recommend to you for reading during this course, not because it

has anything to do with what we are discussing but because there are in it sidelights of immense value on the kind of thought we want to consider. The book is entitled Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards. As you know Madariaga has been acting as Chairman of the Committee sitting in Geneva on the Italo-Abyssinian question. You will, I think, find his reflections upon national genius quite profound and most interesting.

The Achievement of Maturity

As I have said, there are certain qualities which apply to all sides of human nature, and I wish to give you these for consideration and discussion. I would say that in order to achieve maturity throughout life the first absolute essential is the attitude of adventure. The achievement of emotional maturity is the most difficult task that any human being ever has to face and, in a sense, it is the meaning of life. The retreat from emotional maturity is the most common feature of every civilization. Every civilization invents ways to protect itself so that it needs not become individual. It can become the pattern of its forefathers. Perhaps the most complete and perfect example of that is the tradition of Japanese women. Japanese women up to the beginning of the present century had a code of behaviour of extreme delicacy and finesse that covered almost every situation in which a Japanese woman could possibly find herself throughout the whole of her life. She was not expected to be individual. She was expected to be a perfect flower and exposition of the beauty of Japanese women.

The first thing, therefore, is the desire to become mature, to become an individual; the desire to adventure in this world of life. You will find as we go through this course that the word "adventure" is very descriptive. If you read any of the really splendid and heartening things that happen; for instance, the life of that young Arctic explorer Gino Watkins or of any one of those delightful creatures who blaze across life, even if they die as early as Watkins did, and have, as he had, the real spirit of adventure, you will realize that the risks, the dangers, the gaucheries, the ugliness, the difficulties of Arctic adventure, the stupidities, the kind of way one has to treat one's own mistakes, are all characteristic of the adventure of becoming a mature human being. That is an attitude.

A quality that is essential in order that your adventure may become successful is sincerity. Sincerity is obviously the most difficult of all human qualities. It is difficult, chiefly, because our poets have misled us. One of the children at the Institute, a girl aged 12, told me she has been learning:

"to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

I fear the teacher would not like it at all because that child comes from rather an old-fashioned school, but I said: "Yes, my child, to which self?" That is the point: to which are we to be true? Anybody who knows anything at all about the subject knows there are three, four, or five individuals inside them. Which are they going to be true to? Are they going to choose the traditional self that has been held up before them and make believe they are that self and be true that? I believe – I do not know because I was not going to cinemas much at that time – that Mary Pickford used to say: "Dream true, dear". Are we going to make a dream that we see and make ourselves dream true to it? Or are we going to enter

upon the far more difficult enterprise of finding out what we really are like? There must be, first, sincerity – honesty.

The second essential is instruction. The moment you begin to be sincere, especially if you are willing, you will find that at least three or four times in the day you have to be sincere to complete opposites. You say: “I love Mr. Jones”, “I hate Mr. Jones” – “Devil take it, which do I love?” You find yourself torn to pieces between likes and dislikes. You are National Government one moment and Socialist or Communist the next, and at some time in the near future you have to drop a little piece of paper into a box which will commit you permanently to one or the other. In the same way in everything connected with yourself. You like one thing; you dislike another. Which are you to be? So the next essential important for emotional growth is instruction. You must know that these are the facts of human life. That is where the outside world can help you. You must be truly instructed when you are young that everybody feels as you do, that you are not a strange and lonely monster torn in a way none of your fellow-creatures ever are.

I have seen enough of human life every day to have had it brought often to my knowledge that two people have come from the same office or school or from the same organization, hospital or any other, and each one, with immense labour and torment of mind, has confessed that he or she is in this stage of conflict and has said “Don’t tell anyone in the office. If they only knew I felt like this...” I knew, of course, that everybody else in the office felt like that and that everybody was maintaining this mask of impassivity before everybody else because everybody felt that no one else ever felt as they did. Therefore, it is necessary to tell young people that everybody feels as they do.

The third essential is courage and that is essential in two ways: Courage, first, in order to keep the integrity of the honesty. It is difficult to go on believing that you feel some of the things you do feel. It is difficult to consistently go on feeling the strength of emotion that some of us do feel, and particularly during adolescence. It is so easy to run away, to drug oneself in one way or another so that one does not feel as strongly about any particular thing because one is afraid of the pain involved. This courage is just as necessary as the courage of old times that looked upon all pain as the physical pain of war. The pain of emotional conflict, the pain of emotional sincerity is infinitely harder to bear, infinitely harder to face than any of the physical wounds – and I am now speaking as someone who saw on the surgical side a large part of the last war – inflicted in the enthusiasm of war by the implements of the other side, because one’s emotional battles are fought alone, without song, without any visible triumph, with no other goal in the world than one’s own personal integrity. So that we need courage of a very rare and tempered kind if it is to carry us through and if we have natures that are strongly endowed.

The fourth essential quality is patience and self-respect. You would not believe how often one has to encourage young people in their belief in themselves. Perhaps the most common feeling of almost everybody, particularly in our civilization, is the feeling of melancholy and self-distrust. Very often the most bumptious people are, inside themselves the most prone to impatience with themselves and despair of their task.

Fifthly, there must be a willingness – I do not say ability, because that comes slowly – to try to practise restraint in action, and progressive endurance of tension. The point about

emotional growth, as you will realize when we discuss the adolescent outlook, is that the adolescent has to learn not to do immediately the thing that he wishes to do. So often he turns that into trying to stop himself wishing to do the thing, whereas in order to give yourself a chance to grow up at all you have to learn to hold yourself in suspension.

Lastly, there must be a certain element of humour. You must learn, and your environment must help you, to take yourself with a certain grain of the comic. It is very difficult, of course. I think one of the reasons that makes the Russian novel difficult for the Anglo-Saxon to read or to continue to read to the last page with the same degree of interest is the intense seriousness which our brethren give to all stages of emotional conflict. That does make it for our race a little difficult. Possibly, if one were talking of other civilizations and other races, one would talk a little differently, but so far as the English people in our English civilization are concerned, I am quite sure that the very best tonic and steadier that one could have in helping the young people to deal with themselves is to help them to look at themselves with a certain amount of humour.

If you agree with me that those are the qualities that are needed in order for emotional growth to take place, you will realize that those qualities are needed at the beginning of life, and it is from the environment, and the expectation of the environment that these qualities will be there, that the children learn to have them.

In the remainder of the course we are going to consider the actual problems which come up in the carrying out of these stages of emotional growth; we are going to consider as many as we can of the kinds of difficulties that people encounter. We have chosen adolescence because it is easier to study. As our chairman has said, it is very much easier often in the exaggerated forms of difficulty to see what the trouble is. I hope also in the last of the lectures to tell you some of the things I personally feel and one or two of the experiments that we have tried as a body in handling, or helping the adolescent to handle, difficult situations.