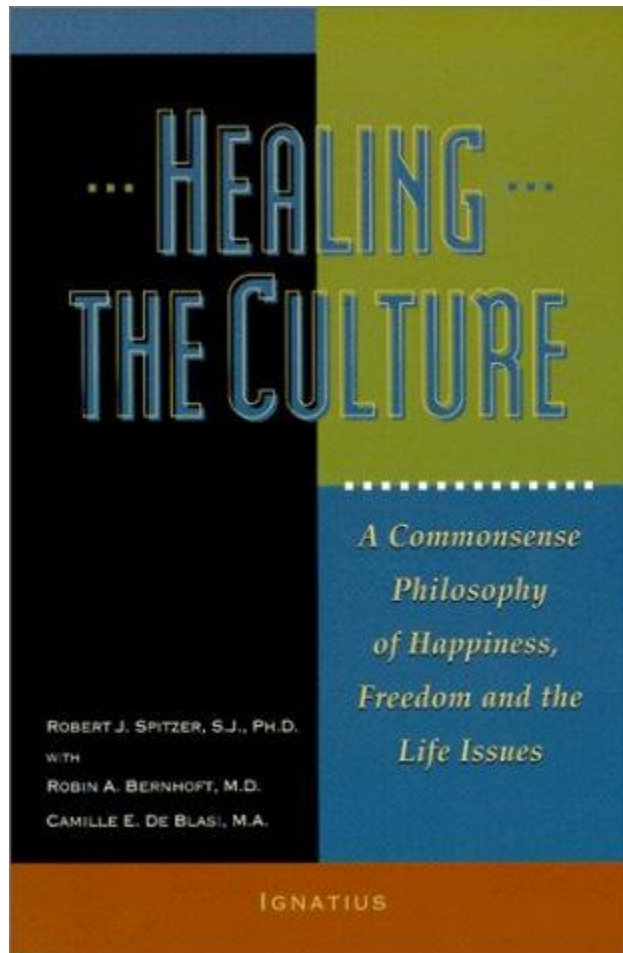


## A Summary of Healing the Culture by Robert J. Spitzer



### *A Summary of **Healing the Culture: A Commonsense Philosophy of Happiness, Freedom and the Life Issues** by Robert J. Spitzer, S. J., Ph. D.*

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## About the Author

Robert Spitzer was born in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1952. He holds Master degrees in Philosophy, Divinity, and Theology, as well as a Ph. D. in Philosophy. He is the President of Gonzaga University, and has written two books and numerous articles. Spitzer has also founded or co-founded five institutes of higher learning, including the Center for Life Principles, which is mentioned in *Healing the Culture*. He has worked as an advisor to over 300 companies and averages 130 presentations per year.

## General Overview

In *Healing the Culture*, Fr. Robert Spitzer offers a philosophy of the pro-life movement as an antidote to the metaphysical materialism plaguing our culture. To this end, Spitzer offers a vision of the human person that accounts for man's intangible, as well as his material qualities. He also develops four Levels of Happiness that correspond to four general outlooks on life. These Levels in turn affect the ten categories of cultural discourse; suffering; ethics; freedom; person; rights; and the common good. After laying this groundwork, Spitzer applies these principles to abortion and euthanasia. By formulating a pro-life philosophy, Spitzer analyzes abortion and euthanasia at the philosophical level and then demonstrates how these ideas have disastrous consequences for our culture.

## Introduction

Spitzer argues that the invisible virus that is attacking our culture is an incomplete attitude about what it means to be a human person. At the root of this attitude is metaphysical materialism. This philosophy reduces reality to matter and leads to a loss of intangibles (for example, "love") in the culture. Spitzer argues that abortion and euthanasia are part of the culture's advocacy of metaphysical materialism. He presents a diagram showing that metaphysical materialism -> the questioning of the personhood of the embryo and the quality of life of the sick and elderly (which are intangible, not material questions) -> legalization of abortion and euthanasia -> ethical and legal justification of abortion and euthanasia (such as the redefinition of "person" and "rights") -> further undermining of intangibles -> further ethical and political problems, et cetera. Spitzer has established the Life Principles project to disseminate the ideas contained in this work. Through this book, Spitzer hopes to demonstrate that intangibles are not only real, but the most pervasive, enduring, and deep of all realities. If this is true, we must rethink our assumptions underlying cultural support of abortion and euthanasia.

# PART ONE: DEFINING "PERSON" AND "HAPPINESS"

## Chapter One: Defining the Human Person

Spitzer begins by defining his terms. He proposes to offer complete and objective definitions for his terms, "complete" according to Aristotle's causal explanations (material, efficient, formal, and final causes).

### I. Four Kinds of Definition

There are two types of definitions. A *nominal* definition does not try to get at the nature (the *what*) of a thing; rather, it just assigns a subjective name to it. A *real* definition attempts to discern the objective nature of a thing. We can get at the nature of a thing by observing how its powers are similar or different to other powers (the formal cause), the conditions upon which its powers are contingent (efficient cause), and what the perfection of its powers might be (final cause). For example, an acorn needs an oak tree to exist (formal cause). To be active, the acorn must receive light, water, good soil, etc. (efficient cause). The perfection of an acorn would be an oak tree (final cause).

## II. Definition of “Person”

To form an objective definition of a human person, we must look at a person’s powers. Some powers we hold in common with animals, such as biological desires, metabolic activity, reaction to pain, etc. We also have powers that are beyond those of any animals, such as love, contemplating beauty, and seeking Truth. The perfection of a person is to contemplate Truth, Love, Goodness, Beauty, and Being Itself. We are guided toward these perfections, whether by a material, genetic cause (such as the cerebral cortex) or by the soul. Taking all this into account, Spitzer defines the human person as “a being possessing an intrinsic guiding force toward fulfillment through unconditional, perfect, and even infinite Truth, Love, Goodness/Justice, Beauty, and Being.”

## III. Some Ambiguities

What if there is a flaw in the human’s development that prevents him from reaching the fullness of his powers? Even if such a flaw (such as anencephaly) would prevent the formation of the cerebral cortex, and thereby shut off the possibility of sophisticated brain function, we should err on the side of assuming personhood.

## IV. Summary and Principles

A being should be treated with dignity commensurate to its nature. Because human persons are oriented to unconditional truth and love and, as such, they must be treated with unconditional dignity. This unconditional dignity is the ground of inalienable rights. Any violation of this dignity, which is intrinsic to the human person, would be unconditional in its proportion. Therefore, we must make this critical assumption: every being of human origin should be considered a person.

## *Chapter Two: Defining “Happiness”*

While an objective definition gives certitude, it does not give freedom. We must engage our hearts as well.

### I. The “Heart”

The heart seeks meaning and purpose in life. It is not limited to the tangible, but is open to meaning beyond the reach of the intellect. The heart also gives a different vision of the human person.

### II. The Effect of the “Heart” on Culture

The heart moves us to care about the person, not just contemplate it as an abstraction. And the “person” affects “rights,” which affects the “common good.”

### III. Four Levels of Happiness, Desire, and Purpose in Life

Happiness is linked to desire, and desire is linked to purpose; therefore, happiness is also linked to purpose. Everyone seeks happiness, but not everyone finds it. Philosophers throughout the ages have tried to categorize the types of happiness. “Lower” kinds of happiness are immediate, intense, and apparent, but are not long-lasting and are narrow in focus. “Higher” forms of happiness are pervasive, enduring, and satisfying, but are more abstract, take more effort, and are often delayed. Spitzer categorizes four levels of happiness. Level 1 happiness involves the senses and comes from an external stimulus. It is immediately gratifying, but not long lasting, like eating a candy bar. Level 2 happiness involves ego gratification, shifting control from the outer world to myself (such as gaining popularity). Level 3 happiness shifts the focus from ourselves to the outer

world, when we try to make a difference in others' lives. Level 4 happiness comes from the desire for the unconditional, perfect, love, truth, beauty, and being (God).

### ***Chapter Three: Moving Through the Levels of Happiness***

In this chapter, Spitzer shows how all four levels of happiness are at work to some degree in our lives; we must understand them and act accordingly.

#### **I. The First Level of Happiness and Its Crisis**

Happiness 1 is enjoyable, but superficial. If one were to live completely in Happiness 1, he would arrive at a state Spitzer calls Crisis 1- boredom, loneliness, and lack of direction. Crisis 1 suggests that human persons are more than matter, and that our spiritual needs are broader than the experiences offered in Happiness 1. Hopefully, the pain of Crisis 1 will push the person toward the next level, Happiness 2.

#### **II. The Second Level of Happiness and Its Crisis**

Happiness 2 creates a healthy self-esteem and stems from pride in one's achievements. However, it can devolve into self-advancement that sees relationships as threats. Thus, one falls into the "comparison game," always trying to be better than others. This has three disadvantages. Firstly, one becomes so consumed with besting one's "opponents" that the deeper contributions that one might make to society fall by the wayside. Secondly, one's relationships suffer when one is consumed with himself and overly critical of others. Thirdly, one's vision of life is narrowed when all one cares about is whether he is better, worse, or equal to a given rival. If one is better, he might experience contempt for his rival, a drive to achieve more, and emptiness, as his achievement does not fulfill him. If one is worse, he may become depressed, jealous, or feel inferior. If one is equal to the rival, he may become overly suspicious or fearful of losing to the rival in the future. There is no positive emotional outcome.

#### **III. The Third Level of Happiness: A Way out of the Comparison Game**

Clearly, one cannot "win" the comparison game. The way out of it is to look for a good beyond self.

#### **A. Five Fundamental Attitudes**

We cannot "turn off" our Level 2 desires as they are part of us. But we can move beyond the comparison game by adding Levels 3 and 4 objectives to our Level 2 desires. Cultivating these five attitudes will help achieve this goal. The first attitude is concerned with meaning and purpose in life. Rather than trying to be better than others, we should make positive contributions to others around us. By making lists and concrete goals, we can stay focused on contributing, not comparing. The second attitude is our view of others. A Level 2 attitude looks for the bad news in others, but instead we should look for the good news in others. We should focus on the other's goodness, potential, and mystery, rather than on his faults. The third attitude concerns our view of relationships. To an exclusively Level 2 person, relationships are a threat to the ego. This leads the Level 2 person to treat others with suspicion and control, which causes the other person to become defensive, leading to the breakdown of communication and the rise of aggression. Instead, we should seek a common cause with others, leading to mutual enjoyment and teamwork. This causes a different scenario to play out: because I treat another with trust and work toward a common goal, the other person responds with concern, enhancing communication and increasing commitment. The fourth attitude deals with one's view of self. A Level 2 attitude sees the self and all persons as objects that can be compared. Instead, we should look for the "subject" self in all its likeable uniqueness. The fifth attitude is our view of the world. Level 2 views life as a series of problems, but if one strives to add Levels 3 and 4 goals, life becomes an opportunity and adventure.

## **B. The Essence of the Third Level: Love**

Love is looking for the good news in the other, which leads to acceptance, a desire to be with and serve the other, leading to interpersonal unity. This interpersonal personhood must also have a goal beyond itself, lest it become superficial and narcissistic. The third level of happiness lies in experiencing the good beyond self.

## **IV. The Third Crisis and the Fourth Level of Happiness**

Because of the human person's transcendent nature, the third level of happiness does not fulfill him.

### **A. The Power of Human Self-Transcendence**

Self-transcendence is manifest in the desires for knowledge, unconditional love, perfect justice, perfect beauty, to be at home in the world, and for a relationship with God.

### **B. The Third Crisis (the Category Error) and Its Resolution**

The third crisis is a category error, wherein a person seeks the ultimate in things that are by nature imperfect. An example is the experience of falling in love: if one expects his spouse to be perfect, he will be continuously disappointed. A finite human being cannot satisfy our desire for the infinite.

### **C. Faith**

Our desire for the infinite and perfect form the basis of our relationship with God, but do not in themselves constitute the relationship. We must realize that we cannot, by our own power, bring ourselves to the transcendent reality that we seek. Spitzer describes faith as a dialogue between God and man with these four parts: God's invitation, our response of freedom (deciding that Perfection, that is, God, exists), our response of accepting God into our lives, and God's response (a feeling of being at home, peace, and joy).

## **V. Some Supplemental Prayers to Enhance the Life of Faith**

Spitzer gives examples of prayers to enhance faith. His particular favorite is "Thy will be done."

## **VI. Ramifications of the Four Levels on the Notion of "Person"**

The way one views happiness and meaning in life affects the way one sees the person. The reasons of the heart add meaning and passion to our discussion of the human person.

# **PART TWO: THE TEN CATEGORIES OF CULTURAL DISCOURSE**

The ten categories of cultural discourse are happiness, success, quality of life, love, suffering, ethics, freedom, person, rights, and the common good. All are interrelated.

## ***Chapter Four: Happiness, Success, Quality of Life, and Love***

### **I. Success**

An explicit or implicit definition of success shows us what we think our goals ought to be. There are four levels of success, corresponding to the four levels of happiness. Success 1 reflects the values of Happiness 1, and consists of a variety of material comforts. Success 2 takes its cue from the comparison game and focuses on having more (popularity, accomplishments, status) than others. Success 3 sees a life spent in service to others as a life well lived. Success 4 counteracts the tendency to the “hero complex” found in Success 3, and submits itself to the will of God in one’s life

## II. The Relationship Between Self-Worth and Quality of Life

One’s view of quality of life affects one’s self-esteem and the way one views love. Level 1’s materialistic outlook reduces man to a soulless, mechanistic being. This reinforces the attraction to material pleasures, and makes one assume that others, and their worth, are restricted to material treasures as well. This outlook presents several problems: one reduces his purpose to having, rather than being, thereby missing out on the deepest parts of himself. The Level 1 person will also value others as poorly as he does himself, weakening his ability to love. Furthermore, he will have little toleration for suffering and pain, since they decrease his capacity for enjoying material pleasures. Level 2 restricts one’s value to that which can win esteem, also narrowing one’s vision of him and others. Likewise, a Level 2 person would have little value for suffering and aging, which would diminish his capacity to achieve and compete. Level 3 values the loveable self, focusing on giving to others and seeing the dignity in each person. One begins with the desire to contribute to others, and gradually expands one’s horizon to include both individual people and the whole. The Level 3 person begins to value those powers that enable him to be of service to others, and then he comes to prize those virtues that foster authentic love. From this perspective, suffering and aging can actually increase those powers that enhance love and service. Level 4 values the transcendent self, which sees that a personal God overcomes the boundaries that divide people. Therefore, God is the source of one’s ability to serve. One finds the source of man’s dignity in the soul, and will see that dignity in every person. Without a universal application of this transcendent dignity, one might fall into a nonpersonal religion, seeing God as unjust or uncaring, and using “God’s will” to justify capricious acts. A Level 4 perspective views suffering and aging as helping one to more fully participate in one’s transcendent dignity.

## III. Love

Love of self and neighbor are necessarily related. Also, one’s view of happiness affects his view of love. Since Level 1 is preoccupied with the immediately gratifying; love is often reduced to feelings and the appreciation of exterior beauty. Because Level 2 is preoccupied with the self, it appreciates being loved while not giving of the self. When the self is constantly looking for affirmation, one moves from person to person, looking for another person to affirm his self-worth. To guard against this painful situation, one must seek out friendships with Level 3 and 4 people, try to encourage Level 3 and 4 thinking in oneself, and teach these principles to youth. With respect to Level 3, one rejoices in loving the loveable. One sees the intrinsic goodness of the beloved and longs to commit oneself. Level 3 also provides the right context for the gift of sexuality, the gift of self to the beloved. Level 4 perceives the transcendent dignity and goodness of all human beings, while realizing that God alone can completely fulfill one’s desire for the perfect. Spitzer then gives four questions to help move toward a Level 4 love: what is the most positive and creative power within oneself? (love), if persons are made to find our most positive purpose in life through love, could it be that the Creator is devoid of love? (no), if man’s desire for love is unconditional, then could it be that the Creator of this desire is not Himself unconditional love? (no), and if the Creator is unconditional love, would He want to enter into a relationship of intense intimacy and generativity with man – would He want to be *Emmanuel*, God with us? (yes).

## Chapter Five: Suffering Well

If one does not find something positive in suffering, it will bring on malaise, depression, and despair. Positive results from suffering come from a Level 3 or 4 view, while negative results come from Levels 1 and 2. Our interpretation of suffering involves a personal choice and education – we need to have our eyes opened to the possibility of suffering well.

### **I. Transforming Suffering from a Negative to a Positive (Moving from Level 2 to Level 3)**

A Level 2 view of suffering is not completely negative, since the Level 2 promotion of achievement can foster courage and personal strength in suffering. However, the initial positive reaction cannot be sustained, and suffering in the long-term will certainly inhibit the achievement of Level 2 goals. Level 3 provides a better basis for suffering well. Level 3 helps us to grow in humility, awareness of the dignity of the other (resulting in compassion), forgiveness, the ability to contribute to others, wisdom, Love 3, and leadership toward the common good, which all help us to suffer well. There are four choices we can make to help us suffer well: move toward Level 3 by embracing the five fundamental attitudes (chapter three), choose to interpret suffering positively by looking at the seven outcomes of Level 3 suffering mentioned previously, use your vulnerability to empathize with the vulnerability of others, and choose to use Level 3 love to serve the common good. Through these choices, suffering will become a gift.

### **II. Moving from a Level 3 to a Level 4 Interpretation of Suffering**

Vulnerability helps one to accept aid from others and also from God. Faith enables one to overcome fear, because in surrender to God, suffering is transformed into love. Suffering becomes a conduit for the unconditionally loving God to become manifest in the world and in one's own heart. Inviting God into one's life opens one's eyes to the transcendent dignity of each person, eliciting compassion and forgiveness. Faith sees this truth: the unconditionally loving God would never permit suffering or evil to happen that would not, in the end, lead to greater good or love for me, others, and the world. Spitzer offers brief prayers to be used in the midst of suffering, including "Help," "I give up, Lord, You take care of it," and "Lord, make good come out of whatever harm I might have caused." We must remember that unconditional love requires that four objectives be fulfilled in suffering: that the suffering eventually be alleviated, human freedom respected, and that love and goodness optimized for both the individual and the world.

## ***Chapter Six: Ethics and Freedom***

### **I. Ethics**

Ethics seeks to establish criteria that direct behavior toward the good. This good is viewed either as that which brings about good consequences (utilitarian), or that which is objectively good in itself (deontologist). Since the good lies outside the self, ethics is a Level 3 or 4 enterprise.

#### **A. Ethics on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Levels of Happiness**

The Silver Rule is "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do to you" (principle of nonmaleficence). The drives of Levels 1 and 2 often restrict people to obeying only the Silver Rule, not advancing to the Golden Rule (i.e. "Do unto others as you would have them do to you"). However, if one lacks the contributory desire of Level 3, ethics will become less principled, devolving into ethical relativism. In such a case, ethics may be replaced by law, which coerces from the outside, demanding only a lowest-common-denominator standard of behavior. This is why we need to move beyond law to a philosophy of the pro-life movement, which gives principles to ethics.

## **B. Ethics on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Level of Happiness**

Since Level 3 behavior does not come naturally, one must make a choice for Level 3 and form habits accordingly.

### **1. Virtues and Vices**

Spitzer lists seven virtues and their corresponding vices: self-control/sensuality, courage/fear, generosity/greed, hard work/sloth, patience/anger, magnanimity/envy, and humility/pride. One must not only know virtue, but must come to love it. Then, the heart will give the impetus to form virtuous habits and pursue one's chosen end.

### **2. Norms Pertaining to Right and Wrong Conduct**

Virtues provide internal means to promote love, while norms are exterior means to promote good actions. Spitzer lists five norms of good conduct and their corresponding rules of wrong conduct: respect for life/harming life, respect for the person of others/domination, respect for property/harming another's property, honesty/lying, and fairness/cheating. These norms are common to all people. People at Levels 1 and 2 are bound to these norms by the expectations of society, while people at Levels 3 and 4 are interiorly motivated to hold to these norms.

## **C. Ethics on the Fourth Level of Happiness**

God assists us in becoming loving by granting us the "outer word" (revelation through Scripture and other means) and the "inner word" (the peace He gives to our hearts). Love of God helps us to love virtue, which makes virtue easier to attain.

## **II. Freedom**

### **A. "Freedom From" versus "Freedom For"**

Levels 1 and 2 see freedom as freedom from constraints.

Levels 3 and 4 see freedom as freedom for others, the ability to become a good person who is committed to love. In order to seriously pursue this type of freedom, one must also embrace love, the virtues, and the norms of right conduct. Spitzer also notes that personal freedom differs from political freedom, which is limited to "freedom from." As a view of personal freedom, "freedom from" has negative consequences for the culture: it shifts the goals of youth from worthy goals to "what I don't want to do," it stifles virtue, makes people easily offended, and fosters the need for immediate gratification.

### **B. Defining "Want" and "Choice"**

One should not confuse "want" with intensity of desire. If one does this, he will rarely choose what is enduring, and if one does choose what is enduring, he will be dissatisfied because he thinks that he is really denying his "wants." Therefore, Spitzer makes this distinction: there are two kinds of wants, those that are tangible and those that are enduring. We must recognize these two wants, and then choose accordingly. Anything short of this will devolve into hedonism.

### **C. Freedom on the Third Level of Happiness**



One must form habits to embrace “freedom for.” Spitzer gives five techniques to help form a habit: love the objective sought, be aware of the “threshold period” (i.e. the time of maximum resistance to the new habit, which usually lasts about ten minutes), change one’s self-image to correspond to the new habit, reinforce that new self-image, and pray.

#### **D. Freedom on the Fourth Level of Happiness**

Surrender to God eases the path to change and also gives guidance; one does not need to be completely reliant upon oneself.

#### **E. Freedom and Abortion**

A woman considering abortion should be aware of the ideals of Level 3 and “freedom for,” lest she confuse her wants with her most intense emotional desires.

#### **F. Freedom and Euthanasia**

Freedom is not an end in itself; rather, it is the vehicle by which commitment to one’s goals is actualized. Euthanasia advocates view freedom differently: euthanasia views death as better than life and is not committed to what is enduring; euthanasia ceases contact with the human community, and is not committed to what is pervasive; it is the antithesis of commitment. When the elderly are in most need of support, even the option of assisted suicide sends the message that their lives are worthless. This message has the effects of encouraging them to terminate the most significant part of their lives, as well as biasing them toward a Level 2 view of life. Since freedom involves an informed, emotionally detached choice in favor of the enduring, euthanasia is antithetical to freedom. Further, even the possibility of euthanasia imposes a duty to die, since the elderly may feel pressured to relieve their families of the burden of their care. Finally, if one says that he “wants” to die, one should examine if he is confusing his “wants” with his most intense momentary emotion.

### ***Chapter Seven: Person, Rights, and the Common Good***

Our view of person, rights, and common good are intertwined.

#### **I. Inalienable Rights**

Human persons possess inalienable rights because they have an unconditional dignity founded on their fulfillment in unconditional Truth, Love, and Being. By virtue of this unconditional dignity – not because of the power of the state – we are obligated to unconditionally respect each human being.

##### **A. The General Notion of a Right**

A right is the obligation of the state or individual toward the individual person, which is ordered toward the fulfillment of human personhood. These rights may be inalienable (belonging to the individual and cannot be taken away) or extrinsic (given by law and can be removed by law). Protecting the rights of individuals contributes to the common good. It is the intrinsic duty of the state to protect the inalienable rights of its citizens. Inalienable rights may be violated when an individual has violated the rights of others, but they are not taken away. If a state takes away inalienable rights, it undermines its very purpose and loses its legitimacy. The state’s priorities are ranked as follows: inalienable rights of all citizens, common good, objective of the state, legitimacy of the state, and power to enact a constitution.

##### **B. Three Inalienable Rights**

Three inalienable rights are life, liberty (what is necessary for the possibility of self-possession, ruling out slavery), and property (insofar as it makes liberty possible – Spitzer is talking about the right to not be a serf, not the right to own a Corvette).

### **C. The Objective Prioritization of Inalienable Rights and the Resolution of Rights Conflicts**

The hierarchy of inalienable rights is as follows: life, liberty, and property. The higher ranked rights make the lower ranked rights possible. The higher rights must take precedence in a rights conflict.

### **D. The Universality of the State’s Protection of Inalienable Rights**

Spitzer reviews three logical principles: noncontradiction (square circle), objective necessity (it is impossible to have a square circle), and objective universality (there are no square circles anywhere). Applied to the duties of a state to its citizens, we can conclude that every human being must be acknowledged to be a person, the state must protect the inalienable rights of all persons, and rights conflicts should be resolved according to the hierarchy of alienable rights.

### **E. The So-Called Principle of Clarity and an Example of Its Misuse**

Some argue for abortion by using the so-called principle of clarity (the mother’s rights are clearer than that of the preborn baby). This is an erroneous principle, because clarity is subjective and can be used by the elite to oppress the marginalized.

### **F. Abortion, Euthanasia, and Inalienable Rights**

Even the suggestion that the state has the authority to grant or take away inalienable rights is an offense against the person. It opens the possibility of the “slippery slope,” where the Court could make further subjective proclamations on persons and their rights. The option of euthanasia as an extrinsic right would violate the inalienable rights of some persons, who would feel a duty to die.

### **G. The Legitimate State and the Objectively Necessary Proscriptions of Its Powers**

There are certain actions the state cannot take without undermining its legitimacy: it cannot violate an inalienable right, declare limits to the self-possession of inalienable rights, subjectivize inalienable rights, sacrifice the inalienable rights of one person for the good of the many, legitimize an action that could undermine inalienable rights, allow a social climate that would allow citizens to violate inalienable rights, or promote a hierarchy of inalienable rights other than that which is objective.

### **H. The Principles of Nonmaleficence and Beneficence**

Undermining the three political principles (critical assumption of personhood, inalienability of rights, and objective prioritization of rights) also undermines the principles of nonmaleficence and beneficence. The principle of nonmaleficence must be satisfied before beneficence can be applied. To begin cultural healing, we must recognize that advocacy of abortion and euthanasia has undermined the three political principles, that this undermines the principle of nonmaleficence, and that this undermines the ethics of the culture.

## **II. The Pursuit of the Common Good**

The common good is the motivating idea of society's activity, and it should be based on the principle of beneficence, presuming the four fundamental principles of critical assumption of personhood, inalienability of rights, objectively necessary hierarchy of rights, and nonmaleficence. The principle of optimal stakeholder benefit applies: whatever is good for one stakeholder that does not harm the other stakeholders or the survival of the group, is good for all stakeholders. Again, one's view of happiness will affect one's interpretation of the common good and who one views as a worthy stakeholder. Level 1 will be focused on material goods, Level 2 on prestige, while Levels 3 and 4 will be more concerned with the goods that endure. To promote a Level 3 and 4 view of the common good, we should utilize education, the media, law, legislation, and commercial establishments.

### ***Chapter Eight: Summary of the Ten Categories of Cultural Discourse***

Before proceeding to a discussion of abortion and euthanasia, Spitzer reviews the ten categories of cultural discourse.

## **PART THREE: THE LIFE ISSUES: ABORTION AND EUTHANASIA**

### ***Chapter Nine: Abortion***

Metaphysical materialism paved the way for abortion and euthanasia, leading to the assumptions that the personhood of the embryo is a non-question, and that the quality of life of the sick and elderly is questionable. "Person" was redefined as applying to only a specific kind of human being, and this redefinition narrowed the definition of inalienable rights, which in turn undermined the ten categories of cultural discourse.

#### **I. The Redefinition of "Person" in the Attempt to Justify Abortion**

Arising from *Roe v. Wade* is the opinion that personhood is distinct from human life. This subjectivizes both personhood and inalienable rights and seeps into our culture, for the legal becomes normative, and the normative becomes moral.

#### **II. Neglect of Inalienable Rights Arising Out of the Redefinition of "Person"**

The subjectivization of personhood leads to the subjectivization of inalienable rights, and the loss of the distinction between an extrinsic and an inalienable right. Now there are an abundance of "rights," and they all seem to be on an equal footing. The loss of the notion of inalienable rights can lead to the tyranny of the majority and a vision of the state as an end in itself.

#### **III. Neglect of the Objective Ordering of Rights Arising out of I and II**

The court neglected the objective hierarchy of inalienable rights in favor of the bogus principle of clarity.

#### **IV. Neglect of the Principle of Nonmaleficence Arising out of I-III**

When the Court separated personhood from human life, it undermined the critical assumption of personhood and the principle of nonmaleficence.

#### **V. Superficiality of "Freedom" Arising out of I-IV**

*Roe v. Wade* advocates the idea of “freedom from” over “freedom for,” and implies that freedom involves complying with one’s strongest momentary emotion. This definition of freedom has seeped into our culture.

## **VI. Superficiality of “Virtue/Ethics” Arising out of I-V**

The so-called principle of clarity absolves one of responsibility and in ambiguity undermines the development of good judgment. Also, the promotion of “freedom from” offers little incentive to form good habits and acquire virtue, since it is focused on Levels 1 and 2 happiness.

## **VII. Superficiality of “Love” Arising out of I-VI**

A Level 1 or 2 view of love focused on the self, rather than the beloved, possibly contributed to the rising divorce rate and the sexual revolution of the 1960s. This attitude is linked to “freedom from,” and abortion became the symbol of this new radical autonomy.

## **VIII. Superficiality of “Self-Worth” Arising out of I-VII**

Our implicit views of freedom, ethics, and love affect the way we look at ourselves. If one loses sight of his intangible worth, he comes to view himself as a thing and to see the world through a materialist lens. The culture’s justification has enhanced this problem, since it reinforces materialism.

## **IX. Superficiality of “Happiness/Success” Arising out of I-VIII**

The justification of abortion reinforces a Level 1 or 2 view of happiness, through its views of the person, freedom, ethics, love, sexuality, and self-worth.

## **X. The Inability to Suffer Well Resulting in a Culture of Self-Pity and Despair Arising out of I-IX**

A Level 1 or 2 view of life tends to find no positive meaning in suffering. This leads to a loss of the ability to suffer well and fosters cynicism and self-pity.

## ***Chapter Ten: Euthanasia***

There are two forms of euthanasia: physical assisted suicide (death is induced by a lethal dose of “medication” provided by the doctor and self-administered by the patient) and direct euthanasia (death is administered actively by the physician). These differ from so-called passive euthanasia, in which treatments delaying inevitable death are stopped and the patient dies from the disease. This is not truly euthanasia, since the patient dies of natural causes.

### **I. Negative Effects of Euthanasia on Individuals**

The argument for euthanasia has four parts: uncontrollable pain accompanies terminal illness, terminal illness prevents an acceptable quality of life, euthanasia is a right, and euthanasia will provide social benefits.

#### **A. First Argument of Euthanasia Advocates: Without Active Euthanasia, Uncontrollable Pain is Likely to Accompany the Dying Process of the Terminally Ill**

Recent advances in pain control have rendered the first argument largely obsolete. Pain control is relatively inexpensive and need not diminish consciousness.

### **B. Second Argument of Euthanasia Advocates: Even if Pain Can be Adequately Controlled, the Debility of Terminal Illness will likely Preclude an Acceptable Quality of Life**

This argument is based on a Level 1 or 2 view of happiness. When a patient is educated about Levels 3 and 4 happiness, he sees the value of this new view and is happier. Not only can the quality of life of a terminal patient be valuable, but those who care for him can also be positively affected. The vulnerability found in suffering also can lead to an increase in faith.

### **C. Third Argument of Euthanasia Advocates: Active Euthanasia is a Choice, and Option, a Fundamental Right; Therefore, People who do not want this option should not be permitted to prevent those who do want it from obtaining it.**

One person's option can become another person's duty. If euthanasia is legalized, many people, especially the most vulnerable, will feel pressure to end their lives. There are many potential victims: those with low self-esteem, those with reversible depression, the stoic hero, the victims of inadvertent cruelty, and the elderly, who do not wish to burden their families.

### **D. Fourth Argument of Euthanasia Advocates: Active Euthanasia will provide a Variety of Social Benefits, such as helping to curb the costs of treating the terminally ill**

Others might be pressured into euthanasia by economic factors. Treatment for terminal illness would be more expensive than euthanasia, leading to pressure to end one's life.

## **II. Negative Effects of Euthanasia on the Culture**

Euthanasia affects the culture's view of quality of life. To legitimize euthanasia, there would foreseeably be a cultural effort to make it attractive, reinforcing a Level 1 and 2 view of life. Euthanasia is a self-fulfilling prophecy: it leads the elderly to a Level 1 and 2 view of life; the culture incites the whole population to a Level 1 and 2 view to legitimize euthanasia; Levels 1 and 2 erode the positive value of suffering; the meaninglessness of a Level 1 and 2 view causes depression; depression makes euthanasia attractive. Further, euthanasia promotes the idea of freedom as succumbing to the strongest momentary emotion. It undermines the value of compassion, which literally means to "suffer with." Euthanasia advocates have redefined compassion to mean "putting someone out of his misery."

## **Conclusion**

Ironically, the "freedom" of euthanasia creates a new pressure and duty to die. It fosters a Level 1 and 2 view of the world, undermines the ability to suffer well, and creates a false view of compassion.

## **Epilogue**

We can promote the pro-life philosophy by talking about the experience of a Level 3 or 4 lifestyle. Education is critical if the ten categories of cultural discourse are to be reoriented to the things that endure. Each person is responsible for doing his part to reverse our cultural decline.