

Our Unity

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Unity and ITC – Avoiding ego conflicts

Some degree of “unity” is essential to every organization of human beings. Whether in families, clubs, lodges, cities, or nations, we crave a sense of unity because it includes peace, harmony and beneficial cooperation. For Theosophists especially, unity ties into brotherhood and to our one Source of All: the transcendent spiritual aspect of the universe.

Sadly, in pursuing unity we sometimes oppress or manipulate others to get our own way or our own vision of what is good for the group. A superficial, forced unity is contrary to human dignity and free will.

Despite our high aspirations for unity and harmony, we human beings are constantly in conflict. Whether it's a minor misunderstanding or a bloody war, we are impelled by our lower natures to strive for our own goals and unique perspectives. In this striving, we can feel threatened by competition, criticism or just different viewpoints. This causes hurt feelings, arguments, lost friendships and even schisms.

How do we achieve meaningful, positive unity without giving up individual initiative and free expression? From sixteen years of International Theosophy Conferences, I would suggest a few of the many principles that foster positive unity:

1) *Accepting good enough.* It's great to strive for perfection in your own life but expecting others to have identical priorities is a formula for conflict and heartache. The best part of cooperation is that we support each other, especially when someone “falls down on the job.” If we can help them in a positive way to do better, that is great. Sometimes for the sake of harmony we just have to accept that a project is late, or less than perfect.

2) *Criticism rarely works.* Certainly we need to know where we made mistakes but it takes great diplomacy not to blame the problem on anyone and