THE BALANCE THAT REMAINS

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THE MAN BEFORE THE STORIES

Before the stories begin, there is a man.
Not a hero, not a role model, not a finished figure. A man who navigated love without a map, without the promise of return. A man who loved as one breathes — sometimes holding one's breath, sometimes suffocating, always knowing that the air is not something you choose.

This book does not talk about him as an exception. It talks about what remains when love ceases to be desired and becomes presence. A presence that cannot be explained. That cannot be fixed. That changes the flesh, time, the way of being in the world.

THE SEVEN FUNDAMENTAL CRACKS

Each story that follows is born from one of these cracks. They are not flaws to be repaired. They are the cracks through which the light of love enters — and the darkness.

VULNERABILITY

Love begins the moment a man exposes himself. It is not weakness: it is the price of entering a relationship. A word spoken too late. A look that betrays. The first crack is always there, open, waiting.

ABSENCE

What has not been experienced continues to weigh heavily. A missed love, a sudden departure, a silence that lingers. Absence is not empty: it is full of what could have been.

BODY

Love inhabits the body before the mind. Illness reveals it, treatment confirms it, limits define it. There are no abstractions here: sweat, trembling hands, sleepless nights beside a bed.

BETRAYAL

Not the spectacular gesture, but the daily fracture. The choice to turn away. The return that does not mend. The scar remains, visible or not.

ORIGINS

It all begins in childhood. The mother who leaves, the father who is missing, the first abandonment that teaches us what it means to wait. These deformed roots grow into adults.

WORLD

Love does not exist in a vacuum. Work, power, social rules, and money all permeate it. A man loves even through external influences.

DUALITY

Fire and water. Word and silence. Strength and wound. Man does not resolve these tensions: he inhabits them. Every story is an attempt to name them.

THE COMPACT OF LIVING

This is not a preparatory prologue. It is a statement: stories exist because life is not told in a straight line. They exist because a man decided not to falsify what he went through.

The stories that follow do not seek closure. They begin.
They do not promise wisdom. They offer recognition.

When you reach their end — or when you emerge before them — you will know you were not alone on your journey. The man who wrote them was already with you, in the cracks, before they even began.

Now the stories can begin.

PART I

A WORLD OF STUDY

At the age of three, I entered nursery school for the first time, where I lived unaware, guided by teachers according to their own method. The following year, I entered kindergarten, but it was not until I turned five that I began to develop my first cognitive and memory skills.

At the age of six, I entered the Catholic boarding school run by nuns, and after just twenty-five days, my first significant incident occurred: I gave a fruit candy to a nun who was fond of it, hoping to receive preferential treatment. However, during a test on a poem by Pascoli, I received a terrible grade. Angered, I stood up and told the nun she had not taken my gift into account. This incident led to my parents being summoned, who understood the difficulties I was having.

I passed the first five grades of elementary school with a passing grade, although it was not clear whether this was due to academic merit or my parents' donations to the school. The first year of middle school proved to be a real test, with subjects I studied every other day and teachers who brought with them anxiety and stress. At the end of the first year, I passed thanks to the intervention of a family friend.

My second year of middle school was marked by a strict Italian teacher who took a dislike to me. One day in April, to avoid a test, I organized a boycott of the school with a classmate, which was closed. I did, however, get promoted thanks to the intervention of a family friend, who promised me a transfer.

I spent my third year of middle school with my grandparents, who imposed strict discipline and austere living conditions on me. I managed to graduate from middle school with good grades, despite many people's skepticism.

I attended my first year of high school in Northern Italy but had to interrupt it due to another transfer. Re-doing my first year in Southern Italy gave me an advantage, as I had already acquired a lot of knowledge. However, I failed my third year. A family friend took me to Rome, where I attended a private school and passed my third and fourth years.

The year I graduated, I was already working for a major company. I signed up as an external candidate for the state exams, but my first attempt failed due to the president of the exam committee, who punished me for a personal matter. The following year, with my wife's support, I managed to graduate as an accountant.

My academic record was terrible, and I realized I had to improve. I began to understand the importance of listening, and thanks to various experiences, including a long friendship with a doctor and thirty-one years of Freemasonry, I acquired high-level esoteric and Pythagorean knowledge.

Today I write reflections on assorted topics, from women to men, from values to principles, from good to evil. The street, acquaintances, and experiences remain the first school of life, remembering that women are the only ones spiritually and rationally empowered to change men; no one can do it better.

DAY AND NIGHT

In the perpetual cycle of Day and Night, we find the natural rhythm that guides our lives. Day, with its radiant light and solar energy, stimulates us to activity and productivity, igniting that moment when our spirits awaken, ready to face challenges, create, and achieve. The light of Day brings clarity, both mental and physical, helping us see the world with clearer eyes and plan our future with determination.

Night, on the other hand, offers a haven of quiet and mystery. When the sun sets and the stars take their place, tranquility envelops us, inviting reflection and rest. It is a time when our thoughts can wander freely, free from the pressures of daily activities, allowing us to explore our unconscious, dream, and renew our energy.

Both alternate in a harmonious dance, each with its own essential role. Day propels us forward, while Night invites us to pause and find balance. Embracing both means living in harmony with the natural rhythms of life, finding harmony between activity and rest, light, and shadow.

In every culture, Day and Night have acquired profound meanings. Day is often associated with truth and transparency, movement and growth, representing discovery, learning, and connection with the outside world. Daytime activities offer us the opportunity to interact, build relationships, and explore our surroundings. The sun rising each morning is a symbol of rebirth and hope, a new beginning that invites us to seize the opportunities that present themselves.

Night, on the other hand, is the realm of dreams and introspection. In the silence of the Night, our minds are free to wander, to imagine, and to create. This is when stories unfold and dreams blend with fears

and hopes. Night offers us a safe space to reflect on our experiences, to take stock, and to rediscover ourselves. The darkness of the Night may seem mysterious and, at times, unsettling, but it is also a powerful symbol of regeneration and inner growth.

The contrast between Day and Night also reflects the dualities of our inner life. During the Day, we are often guided by rationality and logic, busy with our routines and responsibilities. Night, on the other hand, invites us to connect with our deepest emotions, explore our dreams, and give space to creativity. This balance between light and shadow is essential for a full and satisfying life, allowing us to face challenges with a clear mind and few doubts.

WORK AND LEISURE

The concept of duality is also reflected in our daily lives through the delicate balance between work and leisure. Work represents the time when we dedicate ourselves to our responsibilities, apply our skills, and strive to achieve concrete goals. It is during work that we can express our potential, contribute to society, and find a sense of personal fulfillment. Work provides us not only a means of subsistence, but also opportunities for growth and development.

Free time, on the other hand, is essential to our overall well-being. It is the time when we can relax, have fun, and do what we love without the pressure of deadlines and expectations. Free time allows us to recharge our batteries, cultivate hobbies and personal interests, and spend precious time with the people we care about. It is a precious opportunity to explore new horizons, travel, read, play sports, or simply enjoy tranquility.

Maintaining a harmonious balance between work and leisure is essential for a fulfilling and satisfying life. Too much work, without adequate leisure time, can lead to stress, burnout, and general malaise. Conversely, too much leisure time without a sense of purpose or accomplishment can lead to dissatisfaction and apathy. Finding the right balance between these two dimensions is an art that requires awareness and attention.

In short, just as Day and Night alternate in a continuous dance, so too must work and leisure coexist and support each other. Both are essential to our psychophysical balance, allowing us to live a rich, dynamic life in tune with our values and aspirations. Embracing this duality means recognizing the importance of every moment and valuing every aspect of our existence.

ITALIAN AND AMERICAN

Here are some differences between an Italian and an American employee: according to the treaties signed by mothers in their respective countries, highlighted above, their children are subjected to this model of working treatment:

The document mentions that the first real difference between the two populations, beyond physical traits, is time management based on individual characteristics. Italy relies on an economy of absenteeism and idleness, large-scale, low-cost, technology-free, and highly irregular production, while the US is accustomed to managing quality, and price is not a key factor, but merely a component of the product.

The tables indicate:

Working hours: In Italy, the standard, contextualized workday is about eight hours, with a longer lunch break, a coworker break, a coffee break, a newspaper break, a lover's break, and a newspaper break — the whole thing comes down to just one hour. While in the US, the lunch break is short and the workday can be more flexible, but much longer. Procedures, gratification, ambition, and wealth are the levers that have led to this.

Vacation and leave: Italian employees enjoy a greater number of paid vacation days than their American counterparts. In Italy, it is common to have at least four weeks of vacation per year, plus union leave, marriage licenses, family bereavements, sick leave, mental illness, or disabling leave, all of which adds up to an unspecified number of days off. In the US, the average is about two weeks per year.

Corporate culture: In Italy, corporate culture tends to be more formal and hierarchical, with a strong respect for authority and tradition, where workers are viewed as costs that do not generate a worthy return, merely unnecessary expenses. In the US, corporate culture is often more informal and purposeful, with a greater emphasis on innovation and meritocracy. Here, employees are viewed as investments, on which to focus energy on greater returns.

Job security: Italian employees enjoy greater job security thanks to stricter worker protection laws, considering that physical injuries committed inside their homes or on the streets are often magically exported within the company for financial compensation claims. In the US, the labor market is more flexible, but this can mean less job security, and here we have private health insurance policies that protect individuals everywhere without burdening the company.

Benefits: In Italy, benefits such as health insurance are often provided by the state or the company, but also include food stamps, public cars, public offices, and privately owned employees — this is the nation of the crafty. In the US, employees often must contribute significantly to health insurance costs, but they also own preferred stock that represents their wealth.

These are just some of the main differences between Italian and American employees.

Finally, to effectively address the two differences, we can say that in both countries children are born within nine months, but while in Italy the child is born with a medical certificate in hand, the American child already has his work booklet and is ready to take up his role.

YOUNG AND WISE

Youth and wisdom are two stages of life that are often seen as opposites, but they can coexist and enrich each other. Youth is characterized by energy, enthusiasm, and a fresh perspective on the world. It is a time of exploration, learning, and personal growth. Wisdom, on the other hand, is the fruit of experience and reflection. It is the ability to make thoughtful choices and see things from a broader perspective.

When youth and wisdom meet, a precious balance is created. Young people can benefit from the advice and experience of their elders, while older people can draw inspiration from the energy and creativity of the young. This intergenerational exchange can lead to deeper understanding and mutual growth.

So far, everything is too clear, but theory often clashes with practice — atrocious, incontestable, true, and full of emotion — which tells us of young people who do not think and old people who think a lot.

In many encounters with elderly people, I remember a 120-year-old Pakistani man, from a tribe in Northern Pakistan, with whom I had a private conversation lasting almost two hours. I will never forget it; in fact, I find myself reliving it every day.

Curious about his years, his life, his food, his illnesses, and his women, but also about his wisdom and knowledge of his growth when he too was a young man.

I asked him why he still had all his teeth and what magical product he used for oral hygiene, and his answer was an animal bone, very sharp, and he showed me how to use it.

Knowing about his illnesses, his state of health, the only obvious unknown was a callus under his right foot that he would have removed as soon as possible by a veterinarian friend of his.

I walked away smiling, I had received personal lesson number 2,156,432, on wisdom, and it was always the elders who were the real winners, they had left the world we were in for us.

HUMAN RELATIONS

In the vast fabric of humanity, everyone represents a unique and irreplaceable thread. People, with their histories, cultures, and traditions, weave together a tapestry of diversity that becomes a symbol of harmony, far from being a source of division. Every encounter, every cultural exchange, is an opportunity for enrichment, to see the world

through the eyes of others and discover new perspectives. Through continuous dialogue, we learn to recognize and appreciate differences, not as obstacles, but as bridges that unite us.

The journey through life teaches us about interaction with others, the value of understanding and compassion. Cultures may seem distant, but the emotions we share are universal. Celebrating the beauty of harmony in cultural diversity, highlighting the stories of those who, through their own journey, contribute to building a more united and understanding world, inspires us to see humanity as a symphony of diverse voices, each with its own timbre, but all essential to creating a perfect melody.

Here are some types of relationships:

Family Relationships: These are the first relationships we form and often have a lasting impact on our lives.

Friendships: Friends are the people with whom we choose to share our time and experiences.

Romantic Relationships: These relationships are characterized by a deep emotional and physical bond.

Professional Relationships: Workplace relationships are crucial to career success and satisfaction.

Social relationships: These include interactions with the community and society at large.

Every type of relationship has its challenges and benefits, and all require time, effort, and communication to maintain and develop.

The best relationships are created between people of the same sex, and we have no chance of being deviated, because a true relationship must be free from interests and be genuine, to be successful.

MUSIC AND SILENCE

When I was twelve, I started my first music lesson, and my teacher asked me, in front of thirty students in the class, what music meant to me. I was the grandson of a musician, self-taught on classical mandolin and classical guitar, and I had a head start when I said that music was the exaltation of the soul.

My classmates smiled, since I had done something boring, but the teacher gave me his academic grade: Excellent. On the vast stage of life, Music and Silence play essential and complementary roles. Music, with its melodies and rhythms, represents the vital energy that flows through us. It is an expression of emotions, thoughts, and stories that connect us with others and with ourselves. Music can make us dance, cry, reflect, and dream. It is a universal language that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers, uniting people from all over the world.

Silence, on the other hand, is the moment of pause between notes. It is the space where we can reflect, listen to our breathing, and feel our heartbeat. Silence is not absence, but the presence of stillness and introspection. It is in these moments of calm that we can find clarity and peace, far from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Music and Silence together create a perfect balance, a dance of sounds and pauses that enriches our existence. Music teaches us the art of expression, while Silence teaches us the art of listening. Embracing

both allows us to live a more harmonious and mindful life, where every moment has its own rhythm and melody.

In a frenetic world, finding time for Music and Silence can be a precious gift. Listening to a melody we love or simply enjoying the silence of nature can have a profound impact on our emotional and mental well-being. Music and Silence are two sides of the same coin, each with its own vital role in orchestrating the symphony of our lives.

CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE

The city and the countryside represent two distinct worlds, two sides of the same coin, each with its own unique essence, fundamental to the balance of our existence. Each of these environments tells a different story, a rhythm of life intertwined with our deepest needs and highest aspirations.

The city, with its frenetic pace and glittering lights, is the beating heart of progress and innovation. Its crowded streets are the scene of countless lives, fleeting encounters, and intertwining dreams. Here, one breathes an inexhaustible energy, a place where opportunities abound and every corner hides a story, an idea, an invention.

Universities, theaters, museums, and cultural centers offer endless opportunities for professional and personal growth. The city is a hotbed of talent, where ideas take shape and become concrete projects. However, this constant frenzy can also turn into a concrete cage, a labyrinth where time passes too quickly. The race against the clock, the incessant noise, the crowds: all of this can become oppressive, leaving little room for reflection and rest.

On the other hand, the countryside invites us to rediscover the beauty of simplicity and a profound connection with nature. Here, the days are punctuated by the song of birds and the slow passing of the seasons. The countryside is a refuge from the frenetic pace of the city, a place where you can breathe clean air, contemplate breathtaking views, and live in harmony with the rhythm of the earth.

Living in the countryside means having time to observe nature's cycles, to cultivate the land, and to appreciate the simple joys of everyday life: a sunset that colors the sky, the scent of rain on the earth, the authentic flavor of freshly picked fruit. However, this peace can also be synonymous with isolation, a loneliness that can weigh on those accustomed to the dynamism and stimulation of city life.

Between these two worlds lies a transition zone, a middle ground where cities and countryside meet and merge. It is here that many find their balance, enjoying the benefits of both environments. In this border zone, one can work amidst the creative fervor of the city and then retreat to the calm of nature to regenerate. It is a space that offers the best of both worlds: the intellectual and cultural stimulation of the city and the rejuvenating tranquility of the countryside.

Every place has its own beauty and unique value. The city challenges us to innovate, grow, and push our limits, while the countryside invites us to slow down, reflect, and rediscover ourselves. This balance between city and countryside reflects the balance we seek within ourselves: between activity and rest, between noise and silence, between complexity and simplicity.

The secret lies precisely in this: in being able to find our place, whether it is in the alleys of a vibrant city or among the wheat fields of tranquil countryside. The important thing is to recognize our deepest

needs, listen to our hearts, and let ourselves be guided toward that place we call home, a place that is not only physical, but above all emotional. Because true happiness lies in appreciating the unique value of each experience and finding the balance that nourishes our soul.

MENTAL BALANCE

A few ten-second signals, during a physical encounter, even in complete silence, are enough to perceive the difficulties of our interlocutor. This statement was shared during a symposium in Beijing in 2018, which discussed the role of social communicators as a figure capable of identifying the difficulties of those in front of them, leveraging the levers of perception and sensitivity towards balance.

The social communicator has been described as a mediator with great empathy and intuitive ability, but it has been emphasized that the role of the psychiatrist remains irreplaceable. The psychiatrist is essential for two main reasons: identifying the type of pathology to be treated and developing an appropriate treatment plan. No one outside of this profession can assume such responsibilities. This balance of skills is crucial to ensuring a comprehensive and professional approach to mental health.

The importance of mental balance cannot be underestimated, as the mind is at the heart of every aspect of our existence. It influences how we perceive the world, how we manage emotions, and how we act. Maintaining a healthy mental balance is essential to living a full and satisfying life. When the mind is balanced, we can face daily challenges with resilience and positivity. This state of mind allows us to manage stress effectively, make better decisions, and cultivate healthy relationships with others.

A crucial aspect of mental balance is self-care. Taking time to relax, meditate, pursue hobbies we enjoy, and maintain a healthy lifestyle all contribute to mental well-being. Among these, sleep plays a vital role. Adequate rest is essential for mental well-being, as it allows our mind to regenerate and process the day's experiences.

Mental balance is also intricately linked to emotional management. Recognizing and accepting our emotions, rather than repressing them, is essential for mental health. Emotional awareness helps us better understand ourselves and others, fostering deeper and more authentic relationships. Furthermore, the ability to regulate emotions is essential for maintaining a balanced and positive outlook, especially when faced with challenging situations.

Another key element is cultivating a positive outlook. Looking for the positive aspect, even in the most challenging situations, can have a significant impact on our mental well-being. Practicing gratitude is an effective exercise in this regard: it helps us focus on what we have, rather than what we lack. This approach generates a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction, allowing us to face life with greater serenity.

Finally, it is important to consider mental balance not just as a state to be achieved, but as a dynamic process that requires constant care and attention. The mind, like a garden, needs to be cultivated, nourished, and protected. Investing in our mental well-being is one of the most important things we can do for ourselves and those around us. The ability to maintain a balance between activity and rest, between noise and silence, between complexity and simplicity is the key to a harmonious and satisfying life.

WHAT IS THERE TO DO FOR YOU?

Those already in the job market who want to change career paths should start by reviewing their CV and improving their skills, which are crucial for making a career choice.

Likewise, those on the margins of unstable, low-paying jobs face a similar process, albeit with slightly greater demands than their current situation.

The situation is different for those entering the world of work for the first time and need to prepare a biography and resume, trying to find a first opportunity to gain experience and new skills.

There are professionals who collaborate with these people: recruiters, who operate on a large scale, and so-called headhunters, who work for selected clients looking for highly specialized and well-paid candidates. There are also experts who review resumes, making them clear and useful for employers and their recruiting agencies.

All nations of the world face these same problems, with no difference between men and women, but rather between intelligent and less intelligent people.

This brings us to a recurring reflection in my role as a Business Consultant, where I often find myself asking:

WHAT TO DO FOR YOU?

Few people expect complete availability and often do not know exactly what they want or what they should say. Surprise emerges when the interlocutor withdraws, citing tiredness and a need for rest, but there is the awareness of not knowing what they want.

Character, family, national and cultural background are fundamental elements in understanding future times, expectations, and decisions.

Fortunately, I do not have to hire anyone from my team, and once my role is complete, I am paid for my role and move on to a new client. However, recommending the wrong people can lead to a loss of credibility, and the second call might not come through.

To all young job seekers, I advise them to respect everyone, read widely about people and work culture, and remember that a family upbringing that is rich in values produces behaviors that make one special.

TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Tradition represents the collective memory of a people, a priceless heritage of customs, values, symbols, and knowledge passed down from generation to generation. It is an invisible thread connecting the present to the past, a cultural anchor that provides identity and a sense of belonging. Rooted in history, tradition is not only a testimony to the past, but a guide manifested in the daily practices, rituals, and celebrations that enrich community life. It acts as a haven in a constantly changing world, offering stability and points of reference amid the chaos of progress.

Innovation, on the other hand, is the engine of change, the creative energy that drives humanity to surpass its limits. Innovation means breaking the mold, challenging conventions, and imagining possibilities that do not exist yet. Innovation does not just look to the future: it feeds on the needs and challenges of the present, transforming them into opportunities for growth and improvement. It is the courage to explore

uncharted territories and redefine what is possible, often drawing inspiration from the very tradition it is trying to transcend.

These two contradictory concepts are deeply interconnected. Tradition provides the roots and cultural context from which innovation draws inspiration. Without tradition, innovation risks losing its meaning, becoming an exercise disconnected from a people's identity. At the same time, without innovation, tradition risks becoming rigid, becoming a burden rather than a foundation, incapable of adapting to new realities.

This dynamic balance between tradition and innovation represents a continuous dialogue between past and future, where the present becomes a meeting point and a place of transformation. For example, in the fields of art and design, traditional techniques are often reinterpreted through modern technologies, creating works that honor cultural roots while speaking the language of our time. Similarly, in the fields of science and technology, knowledge inherited from the past serves as a springboard for new discoveries and inventions.

Cultures that manage to maintain this balance prove resilient and vital, capable of evolving without losing their essence. Consider, for example, culinary traditions, where ancient recipes are revisited with innovative ingredients, or music, where traditional melodies blend with electronic sounds, creating new forms of expression.

Tradition and innovation are not opposites, but two sides of the same coin. The former offers stability and depth, while the latter brings movement and vision. Together, they create a continuous cycle of creation, adaptation, and rebirth, in which the legacy of the past blends with the aspirations of the future to shape a present rich in meaning and possibility.

In this dialogue between continuity and change, we find not only the key to progress, but also a profound lesson about the nature of human beings: rooted in our history, we are also eternally projected toward what we might become.

LOVE AND HATE

Love and hate are powerful and universal emotions that often coexist in a precarious balance. Love is a creative force, capable of uniting, healing, and transforming. It is the emotion that drives us to connect deeply with others, to sacrifice for their well-being, and to strive to build something meaningful together. Love manifests itself in many forms, from romantic affection to familial love, friendship, and compassion for humanity.

Hate, on the other hand, is a destructive force that divides and wounds. It often arises from fear, misunderstanding, and pain. Hate can consume those who feel it, transforming the world into a place of conflict and suffering. However, it is important to recognize that hatred, too, has its roots in human experiences and, in many cases, can be overcome through understanding and forgiveness.

These two opposite emotions are intrinsically linked. Often, hatred can arise from betrayed love or unfulfilled expectations. At the same time, love can blossom from a place of hatred, when resentment is overcome through dialogue and reconciliation.

The balance between love and hate is delicate and complex. Recognizing the presence of both these emotions in our lives is the first step toward greater awareness and emotional maturity. Working to

cultivate love and transform hate can lead to healthier relationships and a more harmonious life.

Love and hate are not just opposites; they are part of a continuum of emotions that define human experience. It is through balancing these forces that we can find deeper meaning in our lives and relationships.

CREATIVITY AND DISCIPLINE

Creativity and discipline may seem like opposing forces, but together they form a powerful duo that can lead to wonderful things. Creativity is the spark of innovation, the ability to see the world from a unique perspective and imagine what does not exist yet. It fuels our imagination, art, problem-solving, and innovation. Without creativity, the world would be static and predictable.

Discipline, on the other hand, is the structure that gives shape and direction to creativity. It is the ability to work consistently toward a goal, maintain focus, and overcome obstacles with determination. Discipline transforms ideas into concrete actions and visions into tangible realities. It is what allows artists to complete their works, scientists to make revolutionary discoveries, and entrepreneurs to build empires.

Without discipline, creativity can remain an untapped potential, a collection of ideas that fluctuate without ever taking shape. Without creativity, discipline can become sterile and mechanical, devoid of inspiration and innovation. The union of these two forces allows us to fully exploit our potential, leading to extraordinary results.

A balance between creativity and discipline is essential to any success. It requires the ability to be flexible and open to innovative

ideas, but also the will and ability to follow a clear path. Learning to balance these two qualities can enrich our personal and professional lives, allowing us to achieve goals that seemed unattainable.

SELFISHNESS AND ALTRUISM

Selfishness and altruism represent two opposite poles of human behavior, but both play a crucial role in defining our actions and character.

Selfishness is the prioritization of one's own interests and needs. It is often seen as negative, but it can also have positive aspects. Taking care of oneself and putting one's own needs first can be essential for personal well-being and maintaining mental and physical balance. However, excessive selfishness can lead to isolation and a lack of empathy for others.

Altruism, on the other hand, is attention and dedication to others, often putting their needs before one's own. Altruism is a manifestation of empathy, compassion, and love for humanity. Acts of altruism can range from small, everyday gestures to significant sacrifices. However, boundless altruism can lead to self-sacrifice if the balance is not found.

These traits, when balanced, can create a harmonious and satisfying life. The right balance between selfishness and altruism allows us to care for ourselves while helping others. It teaches us that it is possible to be generous and helpful without forgetting our basic needs.

In a social context, a balanced community is one in which people know when to care for themselves and when to devote themselves to others. The ability to alternate between these two states is a sign of emotional maturity and a profound understanding of human dynamics.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Let us start with the question the son asked his father, when asking him if they were a rich family: the father replied, in theory, "we are extraordinarily rich, full of money," but in practice, no.

His early age forced him to reiterate his clarification, and given his insistence, his father found no other solution than to explain that: "There are five of us in the house: me, you, your grandmother, your mother, and your sister." Right? Yes.

Now go to all three of them and jokingly tell them that they do pornographic auditions downstairs in the building across the street and they pay well and wait to see their reactions.

Without even waiting a moment, the three women rushed towards the street to enter these studios.

You see, my son, said the father, the three women will theoretically bring home a lot of money, but in practice we will see nothing and, what is more, we will be left with three low-level women.

This concept was explained by my rector at the closing of my academic year, in front of 120 people, everyone smiled en masse, but everyone looked at their respective women.

Theory and practice are two essential elements in the learning and implementation process. Theory represents the body of knowledge, ideas, and principles that guide our understanding of a topic. It is the foundation upon which we build our skills and knowledge. Theory provides us with a framework, a mental map that helps us navigate the complexity of reality.

Practice, on the other hand, is the concrete application of this knowledge. It is through practice that we evaluate our theories, adapt them, and improve them. Practice allows us to gain experience and skill, to understand the nuances and variables that cannot be fully predicted by theory.

These two aspects are interdependent. Without theory, practice can be ineffective and disorganized, while without practice, theory remains abstract and incomplete. A balance between theory and practice is essential for effective learning and achieving concrete results.

Theory provides a solid foundation upon which to build, but it is through practice that we truly learn and improve our skills. Every time we apply theory in practice, we accumulate experience and practical knowledge, which in turn can enrich and refine theory. This continuous cycle of learning and application is what allows us to grow and develop increasingly advanced skills.

PART II

LOVE AND FEAR

Love and fear are fundamental emotions that profoundly influence our lives and our choices. Love is a powerful force that connects us to others, inspires us to be the best we can be, and pushes us to overcome our limitations. It is an emotion that brings joy, comfort, and a sense of belonging. Love allows us to see the best in people and motivates us to build strong, meaningful relationships.

Fear, on the other hand, is a natural response to what we perceive as a threat or danger. It can be paralyzing and prevent us from acting, but it can also protect us from risky situations. Fear is an essential part of our human nature, but it can become a hindrance if not managed properly.

Love and fear often coexist and influence each other. Love can help us overcome fear, giving us the courage to face challenges and open ourselves to new experiences. However, fear can also undermine love, creating insecurities and doubts that can erode relationships.

The secret to living a balanced life is learning to manage both emotions. Recognizing and facing our fears can strengthen our ability to love and be loved. At the same time, cultivating love can help us find the strength to overcome our fears and live more fully and authentically.

JUSTICE AND MERCY

Justice and mercy are two fundamental principles that often conflict, but together they represent the pillars of a fair and humane society.

Justice is based on the idea of fairness and equity. It is the principle that ensures that laws are applied impartially and that everyone's rights are respected. Justice seeks to maintain social order and security, ensuring that those who commit wrongs receive just punishment. Without justice, chaos and anarchy could prevail, leading to a world where the weakest are oppressed and fundamental rights are trampled upon.

Mercy, on the other hand, is the ability to show compassion and forgiveness. It is the principle that invites us to consider individual circumstances and show clemency, even when the law might require severe punishment. Mercy recognizes human fallibility and offers a second chance, promoting redemption and personal growth. Without mercy, the rigor of justice could become cold and dehumanizing, turning laws into instruments of oppression rather than protection.

These two principles are not necessarily in conflict; indeed, they can and must coexist to create a truly just society. Justice without mercy can be ruthless, while mercy without justice can become permissive. True balance lies in finding a way to apply laws with fairness, but also with compassion, recognizing individual circumstances and offering opportunities for redemption.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Success and failure are two sides of the same coin, inseparable and complementary. Every remarkable success is often built on a series of

failures, and every failure can be an opportunity to gain experience and learn.

Success is commonly seen as the achievement of one's goals, the recognition of one's abilities, and the fulfillment of one's dreams. It is accompanied by a sense of satisfaction and pride that can be incredibly motivating. However, success is not a definitive end point, but rather a stage in an ongoing journey. Often, the true value of success lies in the path that brought us there, in the lessons learned, and the challenges overcome.

Failure, on the other hand, is often feared and avoided, seen as a defeat or weakness. However, failure is an essential part of growth. It is through failure that we learn the most valuable lessons, develop resilience, and discover new paths. Every mistake we make is an opportunity to reflect, correct course, and improve. The ability to get up after a failure, to see the positive side, and to keep fighting is what distinguishes true successes.

The true essence of life lies in this dynamic balance between success and failure. It is important to celebrate successes and use them as a source of inspiration, but also to accept failures as a natural part of the process. Every step, both forward and backward, contributes to our personal and professional growth.

SPIRITUALITY AND MATERIALISM

Spirituality and materialism represent two fundamental dimensions of human experience, often perceived as opposites but profoundly intertwined in our existential journey.

Spirituality refers to the search for meaning, purpose, and connection with something greater than us. It is the desire to explore the essence of our existence, to find inner peace, and to establish a profound connection with the world and the universe. Spirituality can manifest itself through religions, meditative and contemplative practices, or simply through a personal connection with nature and humanity. It is an inner journey that leads to self-discovery and an understanding of our place in the world.

Materialism, on the other hand, focuses on the tangible and physical aspects of life. It is the focus on material possessions, money, external success, and comfort. In a world dominated by consumerism, materialism can provide security and pleasure, but it can also lead to a relentless pursuit of more, without ever achieving true satisfaction. Material wealth can improve the quality of life, but if not balanced with a spiritual dimension, it can leave a sense of emptiness and dissatisfaction.

These two dimensions are not necessarily in conflict; they can coexist and enrich each other. A balanced life can include the enjoyment of material comforts without losing sight of the importance of spiritual growth. Materialism can provide the means to explore spirituality, creating a stable and safe environment in which to cultivate our inner self. At the same time, spirituality can give a deeper and more meaningful meaning to our material achievements, allowing us to see beyond the mere accumulation of possessions.

Ultimately, finding a balance between spirituality and materialism is a key to a fulfilling and complete life, where material abundance and spiritual wealth support and illuminate each other.

SILENCE AND WORD

Silence and speech are two fundamental elements of human communication, each with its own unique and irreplaceable power. Speech allows us to express our thoughts, feelings, and ideas, to connect with others, and to build bridges of understanding. Words can inspire, comfort, educate, and transform. Through language, we shape our experiences and construct our reality.

Silence, on the other hand, is the context in which words find meaning. It is the space between the notes of a melody, the wait that precedes an answer, the moment of reflection that follows a question. Silence can be an act of deep listening, a sign of respect and attention towards others. It is in silence that we often find clarity and understanding, an opportunity to reflect and recharge.

Silence and speech are interdependent. Without silence, words lose their impact and become background noise. Without words, silence can become empty and isolating. A balance between the two allows for richer and more meaningful communication, where every word is considered and every silence is respected.

Silence can be a powerful tool for introspection, allowing us to connect with ourselves and listen to our inner voice. In the hustle and bustle of modern life, finding moments of silence can be a therapeutic practice, helping us regain balance and inner peace. At the same time, using words with care and intention can strengthen our relationships and promote deeper understanding.

DESIRE AND MODERATION

Desire and moderation are two forces that often compete for control in our lives, and finding a balance between them is essential to well-being and satisfaction.

Desire is the engine of change and growth. It is the energy that drives us to pursue our dreams, improve ourselves, and seek new experiences. Desire can take many forms: from the desire to achieve personal and professional goals, to the desire for love and meaningful connections, to the desire to explore and learn about the world. Without desire, life would be static and devoid of momentum.

Moderation, on the other hand, is the ability to control and balance our desires. It is the wisdom of knowing when to stop, take a break, and appreciate what we already have. Moderation helps us avoid excess, which can lead to dissatisfaction, stress, and health problems. It is a subtle art that requires self-control and self-awareness.

The balance between desire and moderation allows us to live a fulfilling and harmonious life. Recognizing our desires and working to achieve them is important, but equally crucial is knowing when to exercise moderation. This balance allows us to enjoy the good things in life without being overwhelmed, to pursue our goals without neglecting our well-being.

In a world that often pushes us toward overconsumption and instant gratification, cultivating moderation is a valuable practice. At the same time, allowing our desires to guide us toward new opportunities and experiences enriches our lives and helps us grow.

STRENGTH AND FRAGILITY

Strength and fragility are two intrinsic aspects of human nature, often considered opposite but deeply intertwined in our existence.

Strength is commonly associated with endurance, the ability to face and overcome difficulties. It is the courage to move forward despite obstacles, to fight for our goals, and to protect what we love. Strength can be physical, but also mental and emotional. It is the resilience that allows us to get up after a fall, the determination that pushes us not to give up, and the stability that offers security to those around us.

Fragility, on the other hand, is often seen as a weakness, a vulnerability. However, it is precisely in fragility that a unique and profound beauty resides. Fragility makes us human, connects us to our most authentic emotions, and opens us to understanding and compassion. Acknowledging our own fragility is an act of courage, as it involves accepting and showing our vulnerabilities to others.

These two aspects are not separate but coexist in each of us. True strength is not the absence of fragility, but the ability to embrace it and learn from it. It is in the combination of strength and fragility that we find our true human essence. Strength without fragility can become rigid, while fragility without strength can turn into despair. Together, they create a balance that allows us to live more authentically and meaningfully.

IMAGINATION AND REALITY

Imagination and reality are two dimensions of our existence that influence and enrich each other.

Imagination is the ability to see beyond the present, to create worlds, stories, and ideas that do not yet exist. It is the fertile ground from which art, literature, science, and every form of innovation are born. Through imagination, we can explore infinite possibilities, transcend the limits of reality, and experience extraordinary emotions and adventures. It is a liberating force that allows us to dream big and experience life creatively and adventurously.

Reality, on the other hand, is the concrete context in which we live our daily lives. It is made up of tangible experiences, facts, and situations that we can see, touch, and understand directly. Reality offers us stability and a solid foundation on which to build our lives. It is through reality that we evaluate our ideas and visions, verifying their validity and adapting them to specific circumstances.

Imagination and reality are not in opposition but can coexist in harmony. Imagined ideas can become real through hard work, dedication, and creativity. Every invention, discovery, and work of art originated in the imagination before being realized. Likewise, reality can fuel the imagination, offering experiences and inspirations that enrich our view of the world.

Finding a balance between imagination and reality is essential to living a full and fulfilled life. Allowing ourselves to dream and imagine new horizons pushes us to grow and evolve, while staying grounded allows us to concretely realize our aspirations.

INDIVIDUALITY AND COMMUNITY

Individuality and community are two fundamental aspects of our existence that, although distinct, are constantly intertwined and

mutually enriching.

Individuality is the expression of our uniqueness. Each person is endowed with unique characteristics, talents, experiences, and perspectives that contribute to shaping their identity. Cultivating your individuality means exploring and developing your passions, recognizing your values, and pursuing your goals. Individuality allows us to be authentic, to express our true essence, and to contribute to the world in an original and personal way.

Community, on the other hand, represents the social fabric we live in. It is shaped by the relationships, connections, and interactions we have with others. Community offers us support, a sense of belonging, and a safety net. Living in community means sharing experiences, collaborating for the common good, and finding strength in unity. Communities are sources of emotional support, resources, and opportunities to gain experience together.

Individuality and community are not in conflict; rather, they reinforce each other. A strong community is one in which everyone is valued for their uniqueness and can freely express their identity. Likewise, a fully fulfilled individual is one who actively contributes to their community, making it richer and more diverse.

Finding a balance between individuality and community is essential for personal and collective well-being. Cultivating our uniqueness without losing sight of the importance of relationships and collaboration allows us to live more harmoniously and fulfilling.

PART III

PAST AND FUTURE

Past and future are two temporal dimensions that shape our existence and define our identity.

The past is the repository of our experiences, memories, and lessons learned. It is a source of wisdom and identity, a place from which we draw lessons and roots. Every experience, positive or negative, helps shape who we are today. The past is also an archive of traditions and values that connect us to our personal and collective history. However, dwelling too long in the past can limit our ability to grow and evolve, leaving us trapped in memories and regrets.

The future, on the other hand, is a field of infinite possibilities. It is the realm of hope, imagination, and dreams. Looking to the future pushes us to improve ourselves, to plan, and to work toward realizing our aspirations. The future is a call to action, an opportunity to create new paths and grow beyond the limitations of the present. However, excessive focus on the future can generate anxiety and uncertainty, causing us to lose sight of the present and the valuable moments it offers.

Balance between past and future is essential for a full and satisfying life. Acknowledging and respecting our past gives us a solid foundation to build on, while embracing the future with hope and optimism motivates us to move forward. Living in the present, integrating lessons

from the past and aspirations for the future, allows us to make the most of every moment.

OLD AND NEW

Old and new represent two phases of our lives and the world around us, each with its own unique values and challenges.

The elderly symbolize experience, wisdom, and tradition. It is the sum of our experiences, memories, and lessons learned along the way. Antique objects, stories from the past, and traditions passed down through the generations remind us of where we come from and offer us a solid foundation on which to build our present. The elderly are a source of comfort and stability, a link to the past that gives meaning and continuity to our existence.

The new, on the other hand, represents change, innovation, and future possibilities. It is the realm of fresh ideas, unexplored opportunities, and unforeseen experiences. The new pushes us out of our comfort zone, challenging us to grow and reinvent ourselves. It symbolizes progress and the human capacity to adapt and innovate.

The balance between old and new is crucial for a harmonious and fulfilled life. The old gives us roots and teaches us the wisdom of the past, while the new allows us to evolve and find new paths. Embracing the new without forgetting the old means honoring our history while continuing to move toward the future.

THOUGHT AND ACTION

Thought and action are two essential components of the human process of living and achieving our goals.

Thinking is the act of reflecting, planning, and imagining. It is through thinking that we develop ideas, solve problems, and create visions for the future. Thinking allows us to explore limitless possibilities, analyze situations from different angles, and find creative solutions. It is a time for introspection and dreaming, an activity that can take place in silence and solitude.

Action, on the other hand, is the concrete step toward realizing what we have envisioned. It is through action that we put our ideas into practice and turn our dreams into reality. Action requires courage, determination, and constant commitment. Without action, thoughts remain abstract and unattainable, losing their potential for change.

The balance between thought and action is crucial to success and personal fulfillment. Too much thought without action can lead to paralysis and procrastination, while too much action without thought can lead to mistakes and impulsive decisions. Combining thoughtful reflection with deliberate, focused action allows for significant and lasting results.

Finding the right balance between thought and action is one of the keys to a fulfilling and productive life. This balance allows us to move forward with awareness and confidence, guided by an unobstructed vision and supported by concrete steps.

DREAM AND REALITY

Dreams and reality are two dimensions of our experience that are often intertwined in fascinating and complex ways.

Dreams represent the realm of imagination, aspirations, and possibilities. They are a space where we can explore without limits, imagine what we desire, and give shape to our deepest hopes and desires. Dreams offer us an escape from everyday reality, allowing us to experience fantastic scenarios and see the world through new eyes. They are also a source of inspiration, pushing us to push our limits and pursue ambitious goals.

Reality, on the other hand, is the tangible world we live in every day. It is made up of concrete experiences, daily challenges, and measurable results. Reality offers us a solid foundation on which to build and evaluate the validity of our dreams. It is the context in which we evaluate our ideas and where we face the consequences of our actions. Reality keeps us grounded and provides us with the means to realize our dreams.

A balance between dreams and reality is essential for a full and satisfying life. Dreams give us purpose and direction, while reality offers us the tools and resources to achieve them. Cultivating our dreams without losing sight of reality allows us to live creatively and proactively. At the same time, approaching reality with a positive, dream-oriented attitude helps us overcome difficulties and find new opportunities.

By living between dream and reality, we can create a life enriched by both dimensions, where every dream can become a reality and every reality can be influenced by our dreams.

EMPATHY AND INDIFFERENCE

Empathy and indifference are two fundamental attitudes that profoundly influence our interactions and relationships.

Empathy is a quality that allows us to connect with those around us, offer support, and build relationships based on mutual understanding. Empathy fosters cooperation, reduces conflict, and creates a sense of community. When we empathize, we put ourselves in others' shoes, feel their joys and sorrows, and are motivated to do what we can to help them.

Indifference, on the other hand, is an attitude of detachment and lack of interest in others. Indifference can arise from selfishness, fear of involvement, or lack of awareness. When we are indifferent, we INNOCENTLY ignore the needs and suffering of others, retreating into a shell of insensitivity. Indifference can lead to social disconnection, isolation, and a lack of solidarity.

Finding a balance between empathy and indifference is important for our well-being and that of the society we live in. Cultivating empathy makes us better and more aware of people, while recognizing when it is necessary to maintain a certain distance helps us protect our mental health and avoid emotional exhaustion. Empathy connects us to others, while awareness of our limitations allows us to take care of ourselves.

AMBITION AND CONTENTMENT

Ambition and contentment are two states of mind that often seem at odds but can coexist harmoniously.

Ambition is the desire to achieve something greater, to improve and surpass oneself. It is a driving force that drives progress and success. Ambition pushes us to set lofty goals, work hard, and never settle for less. It is an energy that can lead to great achievements and significant personal growth.

Contentment, on the other hand, is the ability to be happy and satisfied with what we have. It is the recognition and appreciation of the blessings present in our lives. Contentment allows us to live in the present moment, to find joy in trivial things, and to cultivate a sense of gratitude. It is a source of inner peace and balance.

These two qualities are not necessarily in conflict. Ambition can be fueled by contentment, and vice versa. When we are content, we can pursue our goals with a clear mind and an open heart. Ambition, if guided by gratitude and recognition of what we already have, can become a positive and sustainable force.

Finding a balance between ambition and contentment is essential to a fulfilled and satisfying life. It allows us to cultivate our dreams without losing sight of the blessings present in our path.

TIME TO SLEEP

I was not tired enough to decide to go to sleep, even though the clock showed me the ideal time to start the rest that would allow me to wake up properly.

There was a rule in my forty years of practice that said: if you have nothing to think about, you are wasting time without making it profitable. And I was right, because in any situation, true results are

never achieved by being spectacular, but by always paying attention to the details.

To my wife's delight, I took the dog for a walk. It was as if he wanted to talk to me, saying, "After so many years, do you remember me?"

My brother-in-law's arrival at home for a typical after-office visit and a missed, usual meeting between us to talk about books.

A new book, No. 62, that I had decided to give birth to, whose title evoked the great undertaking accomplished so far and the awareness that in two years it could be spoken of more as a miracle than as a just achievement.

And then there was Annie with her requests, always present and available, but often absent and untraceable, as happens with all women in the world.

And yesterday I had a conversation with a Pakistani woman, hidden by her veil, by her religion, even though so much beauty can be seen, who would have liked to talk to me, and I did not reply to her two messages, it wasn't my best moment.

Ultimately, reviewing what happened during the day is that rational push that lets you know how many mistakes you made, how many shortcomings you committed, and what you would like to do tomorrow to compensate.

LET GO

Evening had come, these were special days I was living through, I was almost sixty, and honestly, I did not know whether to consider it a

milestone or a new beginning.

Those close to me never missed an opportunity to remind me of friends and acquaintances who had passed away at a very similar age to mine, and that I should never forget that the disease I had been diagnosed with meant that my natural life expectancy would be reduced by fifteen years.

Every morning when I woke up, I technically checked whether every part of my body responded perfectly and I joyfully and happily found the 35-year-old young man living inside me, without going into details.

I finally had some alone time, I had also written a lot today, I wanted to dedicate my time to this story because it was my story.

In my life I had always used common sense and avoiding combat was considered an attitude of weakness and a failure from the outset, while I had always found impossible victories and people who constantly wondered how I did it.

In the last three years as a writer, I encountered hungry publishers and calm and serene social media, but structured on how to do business, because they really know how to do it.

There are so many groups to join, all with the same information-gagging scheme; some have not even read the humanitarian program we support and have banned communications.

Here too, letting go is the best solution, because there is a clientelist logic that I am not aware of and I cannot have the time I would have to invest.

An important piece of information is the request to join the Indian Society Brain Expansion Group to offer my services, but we will talk about this later.

THE WHITE HOUSE

For most people, the White House remains a distant television image, a postcard received from a traveling friend, or a brief appearance in a news report. A simple residence surrounded by greenery and protected by sturdy metal fences is much more than meets the eye.

It is not a museum open to everyone, nor a public library, nor a tourist attraction where you simply book a ticket to enter. Access is restricted to specific purposes and subject to rigorous security checks. Authorized visitors include academics on university internships and diplomats accredited by their respective embassies.

But I was none of that. I was just a Calabrian city boy who, through coincidence, luck, and a pinch of audacity, managed to enter the White House for an informal visit in 2003. The most powerful place in the world, where even ants must follow rigorous procedures to enter and exit, opened for me thanks to a BADGE.

The building comprises a ground floor and a mezzanine level. The ground floor houses operational offices, rest areas for the 24-hour security staff, gender-segregated restrooms, two meeting rooms, the Oval Room for the President's activities, and a suite reserved for him. Everyone who enters the room is constantly monitored: from work to family, to their social interactions, to ensure the highest level of intelligence and control.

The facility has two kitchens: one exclusively for the President and the other for authorized personnel. Any decision by the President that could harm the interests of the American people is immediately subject to parliamentary review for possible disciplinary action.

Beneath the White House lie three underground levels. The lowest contains a nuclear shelter for the President, his family, and thirty high-profile government officials. The second level houses an operating room with state-of-the-art equipment, while the first is entirely dedicated to the Secret Service, in constant communication with the Pentagon.

The airspace above the White House is a "NO FLY ZONE": no aircraft can fly over it without risk of immediate downing. In the event of an attack, an Apache helicopter is always ready to evacuate the President and his family.

During my visit, Hillary Clinton approached me at one point. With a friendly smile, she asked me where I was from. When I answered "Calabria," I saw hesitation in her eyes. But as soon as I said the word "'Nduja," her face lit up with memories.

I was not surprised to realize we were being constantly monitored. We had been bugged since our arrival, but that did not bother me too much. After all, the surveillance of our identities begins at birth. I remember my mother telling me how, shortly after giving birth, she looked at the newborn they had handed her and said, "This baby is ugly, he's not mine!" An embarrassed nurse confirmed the mistake and the mix-up. "Yours went out with the new nurse; only with her did he stop crying. He'll be back soon."

And so, amidst wiretaps, extreme security, and a few surreal incidents, my experience at the White House ended with the awareness of having set foot in a place where every detail is under control, but also where a small piece of Calabria could spark a memory.

THE EVENT

I still had to wait 48 hours before all the guests arrived at the appointed location at the scheduled time, and I could not help but wonder what many of them would do and what time would bring.

Yes, he was my relentless friend-enemy and never missed an opportunity to let me know who I was, and what I might one day become, marked by the weather and by that gene from which no one can detach themselves.

For a good part of our lives, we are always focused on problems to be solved, we only have a little time left to be happy, but we have not properly reckoned with knowing that all this represents the true price we must pay.

It is a bit like asking someone who has gotten married once and has had the chance to do so several times what the difference is: not understanding that each event amplifies the previous one, making the overall vision heavier, more responsible, more unmanageable.

But as always happens to us Authors, every time we are ready to publish a new book we experience the moments, the details, the particulars and although men do not know the joys of giving birth, paraphrasing it is like being among the first to give birth, without waiting lists.

There are many occasions to reiterate this word which, if analyzed carefully, expresses a realistic concept: event refers to something new that is about to happen, a bit like me when I give you, my stories.

PART IV

UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER

Today, on my sixtieth birthday, I was preparing to leave the house for a long-awaited walk. As I reached the steps of my city's cathedral, I heard a voice calling me from afar. Distracted, I thought the recipient was someone else with the same name as me, but the insistence and proximity confirmed that someone wanted to speak to me.

It was my former Italian and Latin teacher, now eighty-five, who greeted me vehemently. "What a pleasure!" I replied, "How long ago!" He confirmed that he had been retired for over twenty years and had never forgotten me. "Ignorant people like you are not easily forgotten. You never understood the difference between Latin and Greek, and the great difficulty in learning was only due to women. You were a master there."

"But tell me," said the professor, "what do you do for a living?" "I'm a former writer, turned book author..." I replied. "Let me sit at the bar, I need to recover... You, a book author? And what do you write?" "Just stories, nothing more."

"If my wife were here, she'd be curious to read you. You are a real freak of nature. You could not hold a pen, you made spelling and grammatical mistakes, and now people buy your books. How did this happen? Did you hit your head? Who convinced you? Is there a woman behind it?" "Actually, there is a woman, a former co-worker, who, after launching me into this segment, betrayed and robbed me."

"But I must tell you, Professor, that your idea of writing is probably old-fashioned. Today, there are many new things that go into producing a book. The latest was a few days ago: with some fellow Japanese authors, they bought a 100-inch monitor, connected it to a computer, and communicated with ten artificial intelligences by voice, obtaining the texts they needed.

"Information today also comes through social media and mass media. The government's sector is no longer dominated by anyone, as it is a very rich and fragmented market."

"Listen, Nando, do you have a book you can give me that I'll pay for right away?" "Professor, give me your email address and I'll forward you the book file free of charge. But before you read it, I recommend you sit down. We must always keep in mind that emotional factors can clash with emotional factors in the worst possible way."

"I have one last question for you. How did you manage to pass five years of school with your final term exams?" "Well, it was easy: in each family, I found a woman who helped me, and I gave them the dream they were waiting for."

KNOW

Technological advances over the last two years have brought Artificial Intelligence (AI) to everyone's reach, though many still take it for granted. It is also making inroads into medicine and all those activities that were once invasive and are now becoming more acceptable.

But when faced with this computer, it is natural to ask questions, to challenge one's curiosity, and one of the common responses among many remains asking what sex it is. The answer comes quickly, saying

it has no sex, as it is an artificial intelligence that cannot be compared to anything human.

We were built with mathematical algorithms that our programmers inserted into a database, creating a continuous search for information and news. So far, so good, but I have had occasion to clash with gender, and I have stated that if the programmer is a man, the trend of the news and the frequency of responses, including the tone, are based on this. The same is true for women.

But what we did not know, we have learned: they were built without the possibility of making exceptions or derogations, and this penalizes them by pointing the finger at that arrogance that we have all been fighting for years now.

But there is another aspect I want to share with you: the ability to identify a person just by their gestures, a photo, or a few words put together. Many would say I could be a magician, but do not worry, that is not my profession.

And people's reactions vary, from those who are shocked to those who tell you they are not interested in talking, to those who ask you how you do it or where we met.

In fact, those who have worked in sales for many years have developed an extraordinarily strong sensitivity that develops a cognitive capacity at the highest levels, even if fraud often comes from women.

It is common sense to leave the place and go away; if people are scared but also captivated by the facts, you always run a serious double risk.

The statement that paved the way in my life still applies and says: never promise, do not talk and start doing.

TRUST AND SUSPICION

Trust and suspicion are two emotions that play a crucial role in our daily relationships and interactions. Trust is the feeling of security we feel toward someone, knowing we can count on them. Trust promotes cooperation, sharing, and mutual understanding.

Suspicion, on the other hand, is the doubt and mistrust we feel when we are unsure of another's intentions or trustworthiness. Suspicion can protect us from potential deception or betrayal, but it can also erode relationships and create an environment of insecurity and tension.

The balance between trust and suspicion is crucial to navigating the complexities of human relationships. Recognizing when to trust and when to be cautious helps us build more authentic and secure connections.

COURAGE AND FEAR

I cannot begin this reflection without telling a story that happened in 1990, in Calabria: two salespeople from two different companies were inside a large food warehouse waiting to be received by the owners to place an order for products. The two struck up a conversation, one from Bari and the other from Cosenza.

This prompts the two, after almost thirty minutes of conversation, to say: we did not even introduce ourselves.

I am a salesperson for a German company, and my name is Lello Coraggioso. The other man pauses for a moment and asks if he can repeat his name. Yes, I am Lello Coraggioso, and the other man says, "I'm Giuseppe Paura from Pagliari, a company that sells household cleaners and personal hygiene products."

Once the initial tense moment had passed, the two became great friends, and in the future, they would even spend time together with their family. It was worth reflecting on how two very different paths had unexpectedly united two people.

FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Freedom and responsibility are two inseparable concepts that define our existence and our choices. Freedom is the ability to act, think, and choose without restrictions. It is a fundamental value that allows us to express our individuality and pursue our goals.

Responsibility, however, is the other side of the coin. With freedom comes the need to be accountable for one's actions and their consequences. Being responsible means making informed decisions, respecting others, and contributing to the common good.

Finding a balance between freedom and responsibility is essential to living an ethical and meaningful life. True freedom is not the absence of limits, but the ability to act with integrity and respect for oneself and others.

COMPROMISE AND INTEGRITY

Compromise and integrity are two principles that often come into play in our decisions and actions. Compromise is the ability to find a middle ground, to make concessions to reach an agreement or solution that satisfies all parties involved. It is a fundamental skill in relationships, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

Integrity, on the other hand, is consistency with one's values, principles, and beliefs. It is the ability to remain true to what one believes is right, even when it is difficult or unpopular.

Balancing compromise and integrity means being willing to find solutions that respect our core values without compromising our principles. It is a balancing act that requires wisdom, empathy, and discernment.

PATIENCE AND IMPATIENCE

Patience and impatience are two attitudes that influence the way we face life's situations and challenges.

Patience is the ability to wait calmly and tolerate delays or difficulties without frustration. It is a virtue that allows us to maintain serenity and focus, even when results are not immediate. Patience teaches us that some things take time and that perseverance and consistency are essential to achieving our goals. It is the inner strength that allows us to face difficulties without giving up, knowing that every small step brings us closer to our goal.

Impatience, on the other hand, is the rush to achieve immediate results and the difficulty tolerating delays or obstacles. Impatience can

be motivating, pushing us to seek quick solutions and work with energy and determination. However, it can also lead to frustration, stress, and hasty decisions. Impatience can make us lose sight of the bigger picture and lead to avoidable mistakes, undermining our long-term efforts.

Finding a balance between patience and impatience is essential for a balanced and satisfying life. Patience allows us to appreciate the process and learn from challenges, while impatience can encourage us to stay motivated and stay focused on our goals. By integrating these two qualities, we can approach situations with a long-term vision, yet without losing the determination needed to move forward quickly when necessary.

AWARENESS AND DOUBT

Awareness and doubt are two fundamental elements of our cognitive and emotional experience, which together help us better understand ourselves and the world around us.

Mindfulness is the ability to be present and fully aware of the present moment. It is the act of observing without judgment, of being in tune with our thoughts, emotions, and sensations. Mindfulness allows us to live more authentically and appreciate the trivial things in life. Through mindfulness, we develop a deeper understanding of ourselves and our relationships, improving our mental and emotional well-being.

Doubt, on the other hand, is the ability to question our certainty and explore new possibilities. Doubt pushes us not to accept things as they are, but to seek better answers and solutions. It is a fundamental tool for critical thinking and personal growth. Doubt keeps us curious and open, preventing us from becoming stuck in harmful beliefs or behaviors.

The balance between awareness and doubt is crucial for a full and meaningful life. Awareness grounds us in the present and helps us live with intention, while doubt stimulates us to explore and grow. Together, these two qualities allow us to navigate life's complexities with greater wisdom and openness.