

Introduction to the Profession of Kinlein

Adjust Your Lenses to See A New View of the Human Being

Human life presents many mysteries, those things which can never be fully understood. One of those mysteries which at first glance appears obvious, even simple, is the mystery of what it is that makes up a human being. What is in the nature of being human?

Various fields and professions speak about the human being from their area of expertise. Physiologists describe the inner workings of the human body in terms of chemical and metabolic actions. Physicians seek to identify the cause and type of disease or dysfunction. Psychology provides theories about human behavior, motivation and the development of the intellect. Theology addresses matters of the spirit or soul. Each discipline describes and explains aspects of the human being from a particular focal point—body, mind, or spirit. Because these disciplines do not address the wholeness of a human being, questions arise: How are mind, body and spirit related to each other? How do they connect to form a whole? How do things outside of the body affect things inside the body?

This theory represents a paradigm shift from caring FOR people to caring WITH people. Through its application, the dignity of the person is maintained, as responsibility and control of one's life remains in one's own hands.

If one considers that human beings, as confronted in the reality of living, are complete, and that nothing is separate from the entirety of the rest, then singling out a part may not be the place to start in grappling with the mystery of human nature. When wholeness is the beginning point and the person is seen as complete and as healthy and as beautiful from the outset, the parts become important only as they relate to the whole. This whole person, body, mind and spirit, moves through life interacting with the environment and with fellow human beings. From this focal point, a different set of questions emerge: Are we composed only of that which can be perceived with the senses or measured with a machine? Is there something intangible that is essential to human nature?

What is "right action" in human conduct?

What is the purpose of life?

What is universal to all human beings? What is unique in each one?

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Identification of a Phenomenon

Questions such as these have been pondered and postulated over the ages. The body of knowledge gained from such inquiries belongs to the first science, philosophy. Philosophy uses the tool of reason to explore all things knowable to our unaided powers in their deepest, ultimate causes and reasons. In so doing, it is the essence of things that philosophy looks at. Because of the bigness of its scope, the science of philosophy holds promise for providing answers to the questions posed.

A theory developed by researcher/educator Lucille Kinlein provides a different lens through which to view the nature of human beings. Unlike philosophers who quested and found answers amidst papers and books, Kinlein's path took a different route. Academic degrees in languages, nursing and education gave her a firm foundation in many subjects including philosophy. However, the theory she developed was not an armchair endeavor. It began in the early 1970's with the vision of Kinlein, who wanted to offer caring to people. She opened a practice of generalist nursing to care for people in an independent setting. She saw that there was a kind of "gold" inside of people that got them through the long days and hard nights. Medicine could help patch people back together, but then they went home to deal with the rest of their lives.

As clients came for appointments and as Kinlein listened to their words, she noted, "I know now, I was seeing a phenomenon at work in the clients . . . It was there in the words (they spoke) and I had to work to grasp it . . . the clients were showing me something that was much more inclusive and much more comprehensive in the person than (the concept of nursing care)."¹

This phenomenon focused on by Kinlein was originally called exercise of self care agency. Later the acronym, *esca*, was adopted and defined as, that moving power in every human being to take action in living life on a day to day basis. The "gold" inside the person that Kinlein had seen dimly from the beginning gained luster and clarity as it was named and studied. It became clear to Kinlein that *esca* was a universal phenomenon present in every human being. The focus and formal object of her practice became the person moving in *esca*, moving in that moving power. From the beginning Kinlein referred to the source of the power as the Universal Source of Life and Knowledge, the origin of all life and all knowledge. In philosophy it is the first cause, in itself uncaused. Study of the nature of the source of the power belongs in the field of theology, but the study of the power as a phenomenon in action in day to day living is the arena of the profession of kinlein.

The light of Lucille Kinlein's desire to care with people in a different way illuminated a phenomenon that had never before been given such attention. There had not been a singular focus on the dynamics of that moving power a person has to take action in living life.²

Human beings have always known that they have a power to take action in life. They have thought, decided, invented, walked, sung, digested, breathed, pondered, prayed, wondered, feared, enjoyed, grieved and taken many other actions. What is new is to look at these actions as aspects of that moving power within each person. This way of viewing the human being provides quite a contrast to one produced by examining the separate pieces of mind, body and spirit. A view of the person from this perspective may require the corrective lenses of a paradigm shift. The theory of moving in *esca* puts Humpty Dumpty back together again. Residing in the field of philosophy, this theory builds on facts garnered from the other sciences to present a new view of the human being.

Aspects of That Moving Power Within

This theory "speaks of a power that is able to be proven through philosophical argument to exist at the moment of the *Being* of life, which is at the moment of the union of the ovum and the sperm which creates a third person... The exercise of that

power...begins at the moment that the cells begin to mitose in the formation of the corporeal self of a human being..."³ Since there is no evidence to support that the exercise of this moving power begins at a later point in time, it is logical to assume that it begins when a human being begins.

The power is *universal*. It exists in every human being who is living. It existed in every human being who has ever lived. It will exist in every human being who will ever live. It is *intrinsic* in every human being. The nature of the power and the exercise of it is the same in every human being, but the form and characteristics of it are *unique* to every human being and are as uniquely one's own as are one's fingerprints. This is one of the paradoxes of human beings: so much is held in common by all, yet each one is different. Even the metabolism of the body has been documented by science as being unique in each person. "It would be a totally different world were we all the same in any one aspect."⁴

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This moving power to take action in living life is *ineluctable*. It can never not be exercised. Persons are moving in *esca* when they are two seconds, two days or two decades old, up until the moment of their deaths. Persons are moving in *esca* when they are asleep, in a coma, drunk, brain dead, experiencing sensory deprivation or physical limitations, acting morally or immorally, facing challenges or succumbing to despair, feeling grief, anger or joy, sustaining health or living with illness. "The notion of the ongoingness of that power must remain in focus constantly, because that is the reason that one can *change* at any given moment, and act in light of a different frame of

reference or motive....If the image of a circle can be applied to the continuum of the nature of life, then one can choose any point of the circle as the best time to initiate change, because there is no best point on a circle at which change should be started. There is always a time when a person can initiate some action....

"Moving in *esca* is good in and of itself. The consequences of actions taken in moving in *esca* may not be good in the sense that the person regrets having thought, said, felt, decided or done something. In addition, the result of any action may bring harm to the person or to other persons, but that does not make the power not good. The frame of reference or the motives may not be good, but the power to act that way is good and *invulnerable* by another person."⁵

The consequences of the choices made are the responsibility of the person who made them. "Hence, the privilege of moving in *esca* has implicit in it a twofold responsibility, namely, to self for the way one lives one's life, and at the same time to others,

who also have the same power with the same responsibility....There is no point in life at which the person does not have responsibility for actions taken. Ultimately a choice was made at some point in time for which the person now bears accountability.”⁶

With this awesome responsibility comes a great freedom. This freedom affects the course of one’s life, the journey as well as the destination. Is it true that humans have this much freedom in any circumstance? Here, it must be recognized that freedom is distinct from liberty. Liberties can be taken away by changes in a government or by force. Though people may have little or no control over situations in which they find themselves, they still retain what Viktor Frankl called “the last inner freedom.” Speaking of his experience as a prisoner in Nazi concentration camps, Frankl concludes: “Fundamentally, therefore, any man can, even under such circumstances, decide what shall become of him – mentally and spiritually.”⁷ Human freedom lies, then, within the person, within that moving power to take action in living life. No one can take this power away from the person.

Esca, that moving power in every human being to take action in living life, is

a **given** from the first breath,
ongoing, until the last breath;
 a paradox:
universal to all persons, yet
unique in each one;
good in and of itself,
a responsibility,
inviolable.

Looking at all of these features of that moving power allows one to see human beings and self in a new light. It highlights the innate dignity of every person. All people are worthy of esteem and respect because they have been given the gift of life. Neither illness, pain, occupation nor economic status can diminish this innate dignity. This theory does not attempt to group or categorize people by characteristics or behaviors they hold in common. The point of departure of the theory of moving in esca is the uniqueness of the person.

The Practice of the Theory

Because what is focused on grows, “....it is thought to be prudent to build on what is good, to support what is growing, to strengthen what has developed that is bearing fruit. The idea of building on moving in esca, which is good, is new.”⁸ Lucille Kinlein’s clients showed her how helpful it was to have someone build on that “gold” that was inside of them. As she and her colleagues focused on this gold in practice, classes and research, the new view of the human became the theory of moving in esca. A second theory was also developed, the theory of assisting persons in moving in esca. These theories provide the framework for the assistance offered through the profession of kinlein. They provide a new paradigm for viewing human beings and caring. The ideas one holds about reality provide a new paradigm of care or lens through which the world is viewed. This theory represents a paradigm shift from caring *for* people, to caring *with* people. Through its application, the dignity of the person is maintained, as responsibility and control of one’s life remains in one’s own hands. Both of these theories must be studied in depth to be fully understood.

This article lays down the beginning framework of the theory of a person moving in esca. In a world where the nature of reality is often narrowed to only that which can be perceived by the senses or measured with a machine, a new view of what it means to be a human being has never been more needed. Ideas about what is real, important and necessary form the foundation of society, and the lives of individuals. The closer an idea or system of knowledge matches objective reality, the more reliably it will help individuals in navigating life and developing harmonious relationships with others. What we focus on does grow. When categories, labels and diagnoses become the lens for viewing ourselves and others, our vision becomes distorted and fragmented. When the inviolable power we each have to act and the uniqueness of each person taking action becomes our lens, the light of truth and beauty in self and others can be more clearly seen.



A New View of the Human Being

There is no point in life at which the person does not have responsibility for actions taken. Ultimately a choice was made at some point in time for which the person now bears accountability.

Human life will probably always hold certain mysteries and therefore spawn more questions. The act of questioning, in itself, may be part of the mystery. As one poses questions to self, examines one's own motives, reflects on actions taken and the consequences of those actions, what forms is a sense of the power of "I" in the world of "my" family, "my" community, "my" country. The lens through which I view myself and others will bring into focus, or will blur, the lines between right and wrong, good and evil, order and chaos in a society begging for direction to right, good and order.

- 1 James, A. "Interview with M. Lucille Kinlein." *Journal of Esca*. Oct. 1996, p. 8
- 2 Kinlein, M.L. *Moving that Power Within*, 1985. Minneapolis, Minnesota: National Center of Kinlein. P. xiv
- 3 Kinlein, M., *Moving That Power Within*. p. 38
- 4 Kinlein, M.L., op cit, p. xiv
- 5 Kinlein, M.L., op cit, pp. 44-45
- 6 Kinlein, M.L., op cit, p. 44
- 7 Frankl, V. *Man's Search for Meaning*, p. 61
- 8 Kinlein, M.L., op cit, p. xiv

This article is based primarily on the writings of M. Lucille Kinlein and Loretta Ulmschneider, CPK., with elaboration by Mary L. Bolin, CPK.

The theory of moving in esca has been developed and refined over the last 20 years by Lucille Kinlein and a core group of kinleiners from across the country. They have been quietly offering this care to the community in their offices, in small educational settings for children and in private residential settings with the elderly. It has been the words of the clients affirming the helpfulness of this profession that has proven its worth.

Information regarding education and research may be obtained from:

The Institute of Kinlein
6700 Belcrest Road, Suite 817
Hyattsville, MD 20782
301-927-3311
www.kinlein.org

The Practice of Kinlein
Linda Waggoner, CPK and Mary L. Bolin, CPK
632 Christensen Drive, Suite 201
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
907-272-4743
www.kinleinanchorage.com