

My Journey in Life

A Student Textbook for Developing
Loving Relationships

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**My Journey in Life:
A Student Textbook for Developing Loving Relationships**

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Comments on the Course

My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Developing Loving Relationships (formerly *My World & I: The Way of Love*)

“The most valuable idea, which permeates the whole book, is the idea of chastity. It is a message that our young people, bombarded as they are from all sides by the media and society that chastity is no longer a value, need to hear now more than ever.”

A group of parents
St. Petersburg

“This book deserves the most positive evaluation. The authors are high-level professionals. More importantly, they have an acute feeling for the importance of the family and the preciousness of children. This combination of high professionalism and emotional concern is wonderful. In fact, only such people can be trusted to prepare children and teenagers for family life.”

Vladimir Arkhangelsky
*Senior Researcher, Scientific Research Institute on Family
Russian Ministry of Social Protection*

“This book is extremely important. As a textbook focused on the young generation, in its reflections about the value of family and its role in the life of a person and in society, this edition is unique. The urgency of the textbook is underscored also by the crisis of the family in the modern world. Delicately and with taste, the text promotes the idea of the unification of cultures, of which family relationships are meant to be the prototype. It is written in a beautiful style that blends the traditional with the contemporary, combining material of different cultures into a harmonious whole.

“Although not mentioned directly, the book represents an attempt to counteract anti-family values and lifestyles that are current in modern society in a way that is free from the didactic-ness typical in many textbooks. The authors conduct a conversation with the student, engaging him on various themes in a way that encourages the student to think. The book encourages reflection and discussion in a workshop type of atmosphere. By offering guidance in family relationships through the skillful use of author-student dialogue, *My World & I: The Way of Love* teaches us the ABCs of family life.”

A.I. Antonov, Ph.D.
*Chairman of the Department of Family Health & Social Policy
Moscow State University*

“Including subjects about human life based on universal values in the school curriculum is one of the most urgent needs of the contemporary age. At the same time such subjects should be careful not to carry too direct and declarative a message, but be sensitive to the needs and interests of teenagers in the context of their day-to-day experiences. In my opinion the textbook *My World & I: The Way of Love* fits these requirements exactly. The moral and spiritual problems of family relationships are presented through the prism of love, the greatest of all values, but about which we are often embarrassed to discuss with our children.

“The preciousness of love, the ability to tell true love from false love, the responsibility of love, understanding what masculinity and femininity means, the nature of the love relationship between a man and a woman in marriage, the nature of the love relationship between parents and children – all these are in the circle of topics that this textbook discusses.

“Especially interesting and significant is that universal values along with marriage and family traditions are presented in the context of different world religions: Confucianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. On the one hand it broadens the horizons of our youth, helping them to understand the culture, religion and tradition of other people. On the other it demonstrates that, different as they are, all cultures regard love, fidelity in marriage, the responsibility of marriage partners for each other and for their children, and mutual respect between parents and children, as the highest values.”

S.A. Belicheva, Ph.D.

President of the consortium “Social Health of Russia”

“This course is extremely valuable as it is devoted to an eternal problem: the preparation of young people for marriage and family life. The nucleus of this problem lies in a contradiction: the desire for personal freedom is confronted with the competing desire to experience close, loving relationships in the context of a family. The creation of a successful family is based on a spiritual and moral unity, a unity of ideals. The authors aspire to present a system of values that young people should pay attention to while planning their life and creating their families.

“The structure and contents of the course are well thought out and logical, worked out around a core set of ideas. After beginning with a general conception of the purpose and meaning of life, the lessons turn to a discussion of issues connected with the physical and social development of the person and then to the question of relations among family members, where the value of cooperation is emphasized. At the end of the book further issues concerning marriage, sexual development, moral choice and love are explored. The book is permeated with the general idea of moral choice based on values.”

A.S. Belkin, Ph.D.

*Chairman of the Department of Pedagogics & Pedagogical Technology
Urals Pedagogical Institute, Russia*

“The course is deeply humanitarian, addressing itself to questions concerning the meaning of life. The teaching methodology developed by the authors of the program is effective in encouraging the development of the student’s character.”

I.V. Iofina, Ph.D.

Senior Teacher

L.V. Uzlova

First Deputy Director

*Institute for the Regional Development of Education
Ekaterinburg, Russia*

“Great attention in this textbook is given to the role of the family in the spiritual growth of a human being. The family is presented as a “university” of human relationships. The authors succeed wonderfully in combining traditional understandings with a serious discussion of modern problems in the areas of communication, love, marriage, friendship, responsibility and mutual understanding.

“It is important to mention that the textbook stresses and promotes interreligious and intercultural understanding, which has become vital if we are to maintain peace and stability in our world. The authors delicately show that the norms and values of different cultures do not contradict each other but are fundamentally in agreement and complement each other in many ways.”

M. Lutfulloev, Ph.D.

*Director of the Scientific Research Institute of Pedagogical Science
Dushanbe, Tajikistan*

“This course is urgently needed by today’s teenagers. In fact it should have appeared long ago. It fills a desperate need in the context of modern school education. In Russia, where serious changes are taking place, it has special relevance for it provides a counterbalance to the negative trends perceived by students during our current period of social instability. It presents an alternative system of values, the awareness of which will help children to form healthy relations with other people.”

A. Mudrik, Ph.D.

Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Science

“Teaching this course in the Gymnasium fostered the philosophical understanding of the meaning of life, self-awareness, character development of the students and broadened their worldview.”

A.A. Munkueva

*Director of the Linguistic Gymnasium
Ulan-Ude, Autonomous Republic of Buryatia, Russia*

“I have been working with children for more than ten years and can confidently say that everything connected to love is very interesting for them. That’s why the teacher who takes responsibility to help them to go through life with the fewest number of mistakes has to choose material very carefully. In my opinion *My World & I: The Way of Love* effectively addresses the most pressing questions of today’s young people.”

Svetlana Smirnova

St. Petersburg teacher

“Despite the fact that the textbook contains material which reflects the spirit and principles of different cultures, both traditional and contemporary, connected to the issues of love, family, sexuality and human relationships, it is able to achieve a unity of feeling by expressing a clearly articulated viewpoint. In reading and working with this book, one receives a great uplifting and inspiring influence. Even I, as one who has been working in the field of education, social philosophy and ethics for more than thirty years, upon reading this book came to a new understanding on several important spiritual and moral points.

“This is not only a textbook on questions of marriage and family, but also instructs us in the acceptance of people of other cultures by seeking to comprehend their values. The authors help us to see them, not as people of “heresy” and deviation, but as those who have chosen a different path to spiritual perfection, corresponding to their place, time and conditions of life.”

Y.V. Sokolov, Ph.D.

*Professor of Theory & History of Culture
State Academy of Culture, St. Petersburg*

Students’ comments

“I understood that the quality of my love, my friendships, and my relationships with people finally depends on me.”

Maria Aniskina

10th grade student, Ryazan, Russia

“This course helped me to solve many problems, to understand myself and to gain self-confidence. It helped me to change my relationship with my parents for the better. It made me think about my past behavior and about the meaning of life.”

Mikhail Grigoriev

10th grade student, Ryazan, Russia

“I am sure that the knowledge I gained through these lessons will help me to create a strong loving marriage and family, to live respecting my parents, to more confidently express my love and to become a person needed by others.”

Yevgeny Kuznetsov

11th grade student, Samara, Russia

“These lessons differ from our regular lessons so much. In other classes we are given knowledge, which serves to develop our brain. Here the knowledge we receive helps us to develop our spirit and heart. In these lessons we are taught kindness, understanding and love towards others, which are so much needed in our society now.”

Anastasia Zakirova

11th grade student, Kazan, Autonomous Republic of Tatarstan, Russia

Preface

The *My Journey in Life* series represents a unique collaboration of an international team of educators and writers. The original versions, appearing under the title *My World & I*, were published at a time when the Cold War was coming to an end and opportunities for ventures between the democratic and communist worlds were opening up in many different fields. Thus, they are probably the first of their kind covering an area of vital concern to cultures throughout the world—the moral education of children. In the nations in which they are being used, these books offer a refreshing approach to the field and are seen as a valuable resource supporting the character development of the young generation.

The early 1990s was a period of optimism when many people throughout the world harbored the hope that lasting peace and harmony was finally within our grasp. However, as the shadow of the Cold War receded, other problems came to the fore to show us that we were still a long way from this ideal. Both the democratic and former communist worlds were being afflicted by similar social problems, such as ethnic conflicts, youth violence, alcoholism, drug abuse, divorce and family breakdown, and a proliferation of sexually transmitted diseases. These problems were symptomatic of a severe crisis of values born of a century that placed the highest priority on scientific and technological development while neglecting to honor and promote the traditional values that had provided a sense of social cohesion and spiritual well being. Brought up to believe that scientific knowledge could solve all of our problems, young people were cast adrift to find answers for themselves in fundamental areas of human life, such as the maturing of their character, preparing for marriage and raising a successful family.

In many of today's societies there is no longer any consensus about right and wrong or which values should lie at the heart of education. Children often seem to question all values and authority, leaving parents and teachers unsure how to guide them. Ignoring the deeper questions about life, many young people pursue a hedonistic lifestyle of self-gratification, seeking to find happiness in material pursuits.

The International Educational Foundation (IEF), through its activities and publications, is seeking to address this worldwide challenge by offering an approach that combines the best of contemporary and traditional values, spiritual and material values, and Eastern and Western values. We call this a universal values approach. It is an approach that emphasizes what we have in common by stressing timeless values and presenting them in a way that can appeal to the idealistic sensibilities of young people transcending cultures.

IEF works in the fields of character education, youth purity education, marriage and family education, and service education or voluntarism. In the field of character education, we have been emphasizing the need to cultivate the hearts and consciences

of children in addition to the education of their intellects, which has been overemphasized during the past century. Based upon the teachings of Dr. Sun Myung Moon, known as the Unification Principle, the *My Journey in Life* two-volume series is an attempt to meet this need.

By teaching universal principles and values, *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Character Development*, seeks to help those in their early teens to develop their heart and character, emphasizing the importance of mind/body unity, the development of the conscience, and sexual purity. As a support, it includes the moral and ethical teachings of the world's great religious traditions, which are at the root of most of the world's cultures.

With lesson themes such as "What Kind of Person Should I Become?," "What to Live For?" and "The Challenge of Life," the text engages pupils in internalizing fundamental values that are at the center of good character. In this way the curriculum seeks to help young people develop the inner strength to resist negative peer pressure and detrimental social influences that are so rampant in today's world.

Fundamentally, this book challenges the student to examine the principles and resultant values that constitute a meaningful life. It offers three basic life goals as a framework for this: becoming persons of mature character, establishing loving relationships and family, and making a positive and creative contribution to society. If young people can be made aware of these life goals and be inspired to strive for them, it will greatly help them to resist the destructive temptations of drugs, crime and promiscuous sex. Ultimately, such socially destructive influences will only be overcome by offering young people an achievable alternative that speaks to their most fundamental hopes and dreams in life.

The second volume, *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Developing Loving Relationships*, written for those in their mid-teens, focuses on human relationships, particularly in preparation for marriage and family. It includes topics on human sexuality, marriage, family, conflict resolution and social responsibility. It also covers problems such as divorce, single parent families, alcoholism and experiencing rejection. The book features marriage and family traditions in the world's religions to demonstrate that there are basic universal norms of human love and its sexual expression. In this way students can develop their vision of a realistic ideal for their relationships and future marriages while being aware of the pitfalls along the way.

If the evaluations by pedagogical experts and the reflections on the part of teachers and students who have used this curriculum are any indication, then it would seem that both *My Journey in Life* books have been a resounding success. Receiving high praise for their content and interactive methodological approach, the curriculum has inspired both teachers and students to strive for higher ideals in their lives. For example, in one study conducted among teachers using the material in the Ivanovo Region of Russia, a high majority of them reported a significant impact on their own personal character development.

Due to circumstances the *My Journey in Life* series appeared first in Russia, followed by many of the former Soviet republics. However, this work was envisioned long before the actual publication in the early 1990s. Although first used in Russia, they were written with the young people of the entire world in mind. Thus, these texts should not be seen as a translation of the Russian, but represent improved editions of the original English texts. In response to numerous requests from around the world, IEF wishes to offer these English editions for your use. I encourage you to translate them into your national language and to contextualize the contents using literary sources and examples from your own culture. You may draw upon IEF's experience to assist you in this process.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the sincere investment of heart and effort by the many people involved in the production of these books. Working under my guidance on the original writing team were Myra Stanecki-Kozlowski, William Haines, Dorothy Kolomeisky, Anna Bzhiska and Prof. Bronislaw Bitinas, a well-known pedagogue from Vilnius University in Lithuania, who served as scientific editor. This team worked long hours with a sense of urgency investing their creative energies to produce the first editions. Others who worked in the creation of the Russian editions were Kevin Convery, as art director, Claude Aubert and Arthur Dagilev, in design and layout, and many others too numerous to mention by name. All of their efforts are deeply appreciated. As well I would like to express my gratitude to those who worked on the present English editions of these books: Robert Beebe—project coordinator, Jack Corley and Thomas Phillips—advisors, Josephine Hauer and Hyun Jin Schuller—copy editors, and Gareth Davies—research, and Renee Corley—proofreader. I would like also to give a special word of thanks to Ittetsu Aoki and his team for their valuable support of this project.

My hope is that these books, which have given much inspiration and joy to thousands of school children and their teachers in the former Soviet Union, in their English editions will benefit countless others throughout the world and contribute to the character development of the young generation in many different nations and cultures.

Dr. Joon Ho Seuk
President, IEF International
Director, My Journey in Life Project

Historical Background

Founded in 1990 by Dr. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon to promote moral and ethical values in education, the International Educational Foundation began its work in Moscow just as the Soviet Union was collapsing. Soon after Dr. Moon's meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev in the Kremlin in April 1990, in cooperation with the Soviet Ministry of Higher Education, IEF sponsored a series of International Leadership Seminars in America for more than 3500 students and professors. On this foundation, in November 1992, with the support of the Russian Ministry of Education, which invited delegations from each of the 88 regions of the Russian Federation, IEF held conferences in the Crimea under the theme "Spiritual Renewal and School Education in Russia". In addition, more than 300 school directors from the Ukraine attended. In all, more than 1,600 participants took part in the conferences, whose theme was the necessity of moral and ethical education. The lectures were based on the fundamental values and concepts of the Unification Principle, emphasizing their use as a foundation for moral education.

Participants found the theme of the program timely. With the collapse of communism the ideological framework for the teaching of morals and ethics had been suddenly discarded. At the same time young people struggled to understand how to employ their newly found freedoms. Many chose to pursue with abandon the material benefits long denied them. In reaction to the collectivism of the past the post-Soviet period saw the rise of extreme individualism.

As a result of their experience in the program the participants were inspired by the challenge of developing a curriculum to promote moral and ethical values to young people in an engaging and contemporary manner. The next step was organizing a group to undertake this task.

In January 1993, an international writing team working under the guidance of IEF president, Dr. Joon Ho Seuk, was assembled in Moscow and set about preparing a curriculum in time for the new school year beginning in September. Thus began the first project of the International Educational Foundation in the former Soviet Union.

Working at a rapid pace, the first edition of *My World & I: The Way of Unification* (original title of *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Character Development*), intended for 13-15 year olds, was published together with an accompanying teacher's manual. In the summer of 1993, IEF held its first Teacher Training Workshops in order to train teachers how to use the new curriculum. In these workshops lectures explaining the philosophical foundation of the curriculum were presented as well as lectures suggesting innovative methodological approaches appropriate to the teaching of the material. In 1994 IEF produced a second volume of *My World & I*, subtitled *The Way of Love* (now *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Developing Loving Relationships*), written for 15-17 year olds. In subsequent years IEF went on to publish

other student textbooks, teacher's manuals, and handbooks for parents, designed to be use for various age levels. Many of these have been translated into different languages with the support of various ministries of education. Each year IEF conducts hundreds of training seminars involving thousands of teachers throughout the CIS, Baltic States and Mongolia to instruct them on the use of the materials. At these seminars and in other ways, hundreds of thousands of books have been distributed in these countries. Currently more than ten thousand schools are using IEF course materials.

From a Mature Character to a Loving Family

Dear reader,

The first volume in this two-part series, *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook in Character Development*, provided a guide to help you realize your potential in becoming a person closer to full maturity, in which your physical and spiritual aspects are in greater harmony. On this journey we have seen that the values you choose act like a guiding light that encourages you to express, create and improve yourself. By now, you must realize that you are the sculptor of your own heart and character.

However, every one of us lives among people and together with people. You cannot be happy when everybody is unhappy around you. It is very difficult to stand apart from others, even if it is the way to goodness and personal growth. Personal growth and maturity can be achieved only through relationships with others, especially those that we love and are dear to us, such as our family. We mature insofar as our relationships with others, with those we love, are harmonious. The name of this immediate relational environment is “family”.

The family is the first and most personal environment that affects our well-being and it influences our potential to reach maturity throughout our lives. Family is also a goal of human life: all of us are born to live with the person we love most in order to continue our lineage. Families are the building blocks of a society and, therefore, one of the primary means of creating a healthy society. No more attractive social solution has yet to be found than: “Through a healthy family to a healthy society.” These are some of the issues that will be discussed in this second volume of the series, *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Developing Loving Relationships*, which finds its inspiration in the vision of Dr. Sun Myung Moon.

In the course of life, individuals find themselves in different roles, which are often determined by age and birth order. During our childhood and adolescence we primarily take on the role of a son or daughter. These are often difficult roles to be in. Children must trust and depend on their parents while they naturally recognize them to be in the position of authority figures whom they love. A sense of independence, however, is an important element for adolescents to experience as they grow toward adulthood. This process is inevitable and very important. It is essential that during this molding phase the bond and trust to the parents is maintained and not severed. Parental love and support is crucial and can aid adolescents in realizing their identity and strengthen their sense of autonomy.

Conflicts during this important time period are evitable. However, the ability to resolve such conflicts can be very positive and lead to growth of the adolescent as well as the parents. Such difficulties teach the becoming adult that conflicts will occur in life. Often these are the moments that develop character and give us a sense of

self. It may be a moment of great empowerment. The ability to resolve such conflicts is a part of becoming and being an adult. When approached sensibly by the parents it can be a wonderful opportunity to teach a very valuable lesson through their role modeling positive values in their relationships.

On the other hand, when parents cannot and do not fulfill their responsibility properly, other persons, such as teachers, may take on some of this responsibility. If parents abdicate their responsibility, this can cause much pain and drastically thwart the development of the growing child. Through this book the authors offer their guidance. They hope that they will be able to help you to understand how to behave in many kinds of situations and how to retain the main value of childhood—the warmth of family relations.

Youth has its own course and the search for personal happiness and love are inevitable. Within this complex maze one will experience success as well as failure; one will sometimes make good and sometime bad decisions. There are countless numbers of novels out there, describing the life of perfect happiness. Reading these novels one might get the impression that humans have mastered the art of achieving happiness and love in life. However, reality presents a different picture. Most people are still searching for the best way to flavor their life with more happiness and love. Poor decisions are made over and over again. Instead of learning from the lives of previous generations we often find ourselves making the same or similar mistakes, especially when it comes to matters of the heart. How can frustration, agony and pain in matters of heart and love be reduced, so we may attain authentic happiness? This has been a mystery for many generations that the authors of this book attempt to uncover.

According to an ancient legend, a human soul consists of two halves—one masculine and the other feminine. When a human being is born, they are the owner of only one half. For that reason every person longs to find the owner of the other half. Those who succeed will find happiness. Let this book be your guide in finding your other half.

It is noteworthy to mention that this book, one devoted to solving the problems of family and love, was published originally in 1994, which was proclaimed “The Year of the Family” by the United Nations. The authors hope that you who are reading it will be able to fulfill your potential as a member of the human race, living in harmony with the earth as our common home. Good luck!

B.P. Bitinas

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences

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Scientific Editor of My Journey in Life

Table of Contents

1. Love—The Greatest Value	1
2. My Neighbor and I: A Motto for Life	11
3. Me in a Group	17
4. Leadership	21
5. How We Communicate	26
6. Respect in Relationships	31
7. Understanding Each Other	35
8. The Thief and the Mask	40
9. Freedom to Make Decisions	43
10. Cyber Ethics	49
11. Suicide	53
12. What’s Happening to Us?	59
13. Polarity: Masculinity and Femininity	69
14. The Social Formation of Man and Woman	73
15. Marriage and Family in Confucianism	77
16. Am I My Own Boss?	83
17. Let’s Give the Floor to Parents	88
18. Money, Money...	96
19. Divorce and Children	103
20. The Single Parent Family	108
21. Marriage and Family in Buddhism	114
22. Problems with Alcohol	121
23. Communication Skills	126
24. Friendship in the Family	134
25. Marriage and Family in Judaism	140
26. Cain and Abel	149
27. Jacob and Esau	157
28. The Family as the School of Love	166
29. Marriage	175

30. Devotion	182
31. Our Emotional Life	187
32. Resolving Inner Conflict	193
33. Marriage and Family in Islam	197
34. Why Families Break Down	205
35. Human Sexuality	210
36. Sexual Integrity	215
37. The Challenge of Chastity	220
38. Sex Before Marriage?	229
39. Problems, Situations	235
40. The Pornography Plague	241
41. From the Doctor's Notebook	247
42. Family and Society	252
43. Self-Control	255
44. Falling in Love, Friendship and Real Love	259
45. Coping with Rejection	266
46. Romantic Love	273
47. Riquet-Topknot	280
48. Preparation for Marriage	284
49. Marriage and Family in Christianity	290
50. The Way of Loving Relationships	296
Appendix: How Well Do You Know Yourself?	303
References	328
Acknowledgements	330

