

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE NEED FOR SELF-EXPRESSION AND THE NEED TO BELONG

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Throughout this chapter we referred to the economic agent as *homo socio-economicus*. At present, however, we much prefer *person of action* because *homo economicus* is a passive decision-making agent whereas *person of action* is inherently active. Accordingly, we have replaced *homo socio-economicus* with *person of action*.

## THE NEED FOR SELF-EXPRESSION AND THE NEED TO BELONG

... where self-interest is violently suppressed, it is replaced by a burdensome system of bureaucratic control which dries up the wellsprings of initiative and creativity.

By means of his work man commits himself, not only for his own sake but also *for others* and *with others*. Each person collaborates in the work of others and for their good. Man works in order to provide for the needs of his family, his community, his nation and ultimately all humanity. Moreover, he collaborates in the work of his fellow employees as well as in the work of suppliers and in the customers' use of goods in a progressively expanding chain of solidarity. John Paul IIa, §§ 25, 43.

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The need for work as such is the second dimension of human material need. Just as physical need derives from human materiality, so too does the need for work as such. Because all human knowledge is acquired through the senses [John Paul IIb, p. 33], there is no such thing as pure human intellect. Therefore, whether it is as physically demanding as waiting on tables or drilling for oil, or as mentally challenging as composing a symphony or designing a suspension bridge, human work requires a living human being, an embodied human being.

There is no human work apart from human materiality. Indeed there is no human person without material embodiment. The dead do not work. Neither do angels.

This chapter proceeds from three main premises. First, *person of action* in the workplace is an instrument of work but more fundamentally is a person and for that reason matters much. Second, work is organized and performed through two main modes or channels conforming to the duality of human nature. Those modes or channels are referred to as individual contribution and teamwork. Third, work provides two main opportunities -- for self-expression and for belonging -- which also conform to the duality of human nature.

Work is any activity that produces a good or service, whether the work is paid or unpaid and whether it is done for hire or not. Included under this broad definition are paid employment, unpaid employment in a family business, voluntarism, and home production. Work is any human behavior that is goal-directed and that "requires the continuous play of thought, imagination, judgment, and decision making" [Jaques, p. viii]. Jaques' defines work much differently than do mainstream economists. Indeed, because Jaques includes parenting in his definition [Jaques, p. viii], work has a meaning that is wider than is commonplace even in contemporary society.

The common good of workplace communities has two aspects -- objective and subjective. Producing a specific good or service through the common action of individuals is the objective

aspect. Liberating participation from within the various individuals who work together – Schumacher refers to this as liberating "ourselves from our inborn egocentricity" [Schumacher, p. 4] -- is the subjective aspect of the good of such communities. Of the two, primary consideration is to be given to the subjective aspect [Wojtyla, p. 45]. For that reason, providing opportunities for self-expression and for belonging and thereby meeting the need for work as such is the primary goal of workplace communities.

*Person of action* is more than a mere instrument of work. Human beings are ends in themselves and therefore meeting their needs including the need for work as such is more important than the things that they produce<sup>1</sup> or their efficient utilization as instruments.

When it comes to production theory, conventional economists focus on instrumentality, and either set aside the problem of human dignity or presume that human material need is satisfied entirely through money. Economists grounded in personalism, in contrast, insist that instrumentality is subordinate to dignity and that because of the duality of human material need humans are not satisfied by money alone. *Person of action* needs work itself.

### **SELF-EXPRESSION: MEETING THE NEED OF THE INDIVIDUAL FOR WORK AS SUCH THROUGH INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION**

The duality of human nature means that humans have an individual side and a social side. As an individual being, *person of action* is unique, solitary, autonomous, self-centered, and self-made.

#### **Individual Contribution**

Work affords a person as an individual an opportunity to produce a good or service by contributing skills and talents that are uniquely his/hers. The process of hiring, for example, is an activity that by definition is performed individual by individual on the basis of each one's suitability for the work to be done and the labor contract, whether formal or not, represents a commitment made by a person as an individual to contribute in some unique way to the production of some good(s) or service(s).

Production is organized to incorporate the contributions of workers as individuals not primarily for the benefit of the individual workers but mainly due to the fact that every human being has a special endowment of skills and talents and typically a wide variety of individual skills and talents are required in the process of production. Skills and talents differentiate one person from another and for that reason reinforce one's individuality.

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<sup>1</sup> Here we mean the things themselves and not the physical needs they may satisfy.

The act of hiring is an individual act in which a person is judged to be capable of making a contribution as an individual. Notice, in this regard, every job has its own (though not unique) title and work space. It is not just a figure of speech to call it "my desk," "my bench," or "my machine." Notice too that compensation is tied to individual contribution and is paid to persons as individuals.

The act of terminating too is an individual act even though it sometimes is done in groups, such as through a reduction in force. It is the terminated individuals who bear any burdens that are associated with the action. The group, on the other hand, has no material needs apart from those of its individual members. Individuals have material needs because they truly *are*; groups do not because, strictly speaking, they are a figure of speech.

A major task for the person who holds a supervisory position is to draw from the individual all that he/she is able to contribute to the process of production without depleting the individual to the point where other duties to family and community are neglected. In this regard, the orchestra director is a particularly instructive model. *Person of action* is a unique economic resource in that a human being alone among resources has the free will to withhold some productive energy. In a survey conducted in the early 1980s, only 22 percent of American workers said that "they are performing to their full capacity and are being as effective as they are capable of being" [Yankelovich, p. 20].

Clearly, limits must be imposed on supervisors who otherwise would fail to properly recognize and reward the contribution of the individual and to fully safeguard the well-being of that person. Such limits are informed by principles such as equivalence and distributive justice, originate from an assortment of sources including trade associations, unions, and the state, and take various forms such as work rules, grievance procedures, minimum wages and maximum hours, and health and safety regulations.

A private and personal decision to withhold some of the energy that one might contribute is further evidence as to the individuality of the person.<sup>2</sup> Jaques asserts that creativity emerges when an individual finds or is given an opportunity to work at the fullness of his/her capacity and in that sense "*all work is creative in principle*" [Jaques, p. vii; emphasis added].

Crosby provides a definition of creativity that expresses the concept appropriately for our purposes. Workplace decision making may be classified as either programmed or non-programmed. Programmed decision making refers to tasks where formal, rational procedures, such as a formula or computer program, have been put in place for passively producing answers in given situations. Non-programmed decisions require conscious control because standard

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<sup>2</sup> Withholding energy through group action in a social conflict such as a strike is evidence of the sociality of the person.

guidelines are not readily available. Non-programmed decisions demand an active involvement of certain mental faculties, the functioning of which is called creativity [Crosby, p. 15]. The effect of applying creative ability in an industrial setting is Crosby's way of defining innovation [Crosby, p. 43]. Nothing is more damaging to creative performance than a false sophistication that serves as a shield that masks insecurity [Crosby, p. 89].

Typically, improvements in the contributions made by individuals that bear on the process of production as opposed to the product itself come in small increments because changes in the origins of any such improvements -- the will and the intellect -- commonly are gradual rather than radical. The Japanese workplace practice of *kaizen* pursues continuous rather than intermittent improvement in quality and efficiency. Revolutionary breakthroughs in Japan are regarded as belonging to an older paradigm [Gross, p. 22]. Albrecht suggests why this is so.

... creative and innovative activity is not necessarily separate and distinct from the day-to-day "efficiency" activity. It isn't as if a working person does something routine all day and then takes a break every now and then to do something creative. And it isn't as if the creative activity has nothing to do with the work. The routine work is the logical starting place for new ideas. The innovative activity is quite properly interwoven with the efficiency activity and serves to improve it in time [Albrecht, pp. 47-48].

From time to time, improvements take place that are better characterized as entrepreneurial as opposed to gradual. Just-in-time manufacturing, the personal computer, aluminum building studs, diapers and liquid-diet supplements for some of the elderly, and the network model of business organization are examples of several different types of entrepreneurial activity. Schumpeter argues that the central quality necessary for successful entrepreneurship is persistence -- the will to continue in the face of heavy resistance and opposition [Schumpeter, p. 132]. Entrepreneurship underscores the role of the human will as one of the origins of improvement. There is more on the person and the work of the entrepreneur in Chapter Seven.

The U.S. economy tends to affirm entrepreneurship. The Japanese economy underscores the significance of gradual improvement. This contrast in experience and emphasis suggests erroneously that the two are fundamentally different, that entrepreneurship is creative activity and gradual improvement is not. Both, indeed, are creative because both are products of self-expression. Both, therefore, are legitimate ways for workers to meet the need for work as such that derives from their individuality.

The need for work is individual in part because the only way for a person to engage in work is by contributing skills and talents that are uniquely his/her own. In some cases the good or service produced actually bears the visible imprint of the individual contributor. In manufacturing, for example, it is common for the person who has inspected and packed the goods for shipment to insert a personal slip of paper in the package as a way of identifying the responsible party. In other cases, the contribution of any one individual may be completely submerged in the contributions of many other individuals and may never be visible to the user or consumer. Nevertheless, the contribution of the individual is no less real for being hidden.

Just as the performance of an orchestra depends on the separate contributions of the various individual members, so too every good or service produced reflects the contributions made by each one of the individuals involved. Thus contribution means that in the process of production the whole of the good or service produced is comprised of its individual parts.<sup>3</sup> By affirming individual contribution as one of the two main channels for organizing and performing work, we insist that individuals make a difference even when that difference is not readily observable.

### **Self-Expression**

*Person of action* has a need for work that is individualized because, if work is organized as if everyone who works is perfectly interchangeable, the individual may become so subordinated that he/she becomes in effect more object than person. Thus, personhood and the dignity that attaches to personhood rest on the contribution of the individual to work (broadly defined).

It does not follow, however, that the human being who works *ipso facto* is more of a person than the one who does not. Personhood is not a continuum. Rather, work must be individualized because otherwise the person who works may be reduced to a mere instrument in the workplace and thereby would be deprived of personhood. Further, whether deprived of the opportunity to work or deprived of work that utilizes his/her endowment, the person forgoes some self-expression and becomes less than all that he/she can be. The need for work as such derives in part from the need of the person as a unique, solitary, autonomous, self-centered, and self-made being to contribute something special and lasting and reflects an interest in one's individual being (self-interest) that is necessary to that person's survival.

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<sup>3</sup> In the section on sociality and the need for work we argue that the amount of the good or service produced and its quality depends on teamwork as well as on individual contribution.

The very endowments that differ from one individual to another and that make possible the production of a wide variety of goods and services mean that the need for work that is to be fulfilled through individual contribution is not the same from one person to the next. Given continuous change in a market economy (demand) and much individual freedom in preparing for work and in choosing where and for whom to work (supply), the individual need for work as such must be addressed through methods that are continuously changing and that may fall short of fully accommodating that aspect of the need for work.

In an imperfect world, the task of meeting the individual need for work as such therefore is ever challenging and stressful. In general, the longer this need remains unmet -- as with the unemployed, for instance -- the more difficult it becomes to address it successfully because with the passage of time idle skills and talents tend to deteriorate through *nonuse*.

There is, however, a positive side to all of this. Human beings are unique resources in that, even though they can withhold some of their productive energies, the very *use* of their skills and talents as instruments of work can lead to an *enhancement* of those skills and talents. For all other resources, *use* signifies *depletion*.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the relationship between work and self-expression is not linear with work as cause and self-expression as effect. Rather, the two are so intertwined that each one at once is both cause and effect. Further, it is self-interest -- a proper concern for one's own well-being -- that prompts the individual contribution. In a market economy where individual income depends importantly on the economic significance of one's contribution, self-interest is essential to survival.

It is not uncommon for improvements in the workplace to have the same essential characteristics as creativity in the studio or on the stage. Artistic creativity is the development of an entire work that is not only unique but also complete. The artistic creation stands by itself and invites comparison with creations of the past. In essence, entrepreneurship is no different. The same can be said for craftsmanship. Indeed, sometimes it is quite difficult to differentiate art from craft. Further, both art and craft appropriately are called "work."

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<sup>4</sup> As with all economic resources that are living things, human beings are reproductive and, as with resources that are animals, humans are subject to fatigue and are re-invigorated by means of regular periods of rest. However, humans alone among economic resources are able to learn new skills and acquire new talents.

For sure, many improvements in the workplace are not entrepreneurial. Neither do they proceed from craftsmanship. Nevertheless, even what appears to be the most mundane kind of improvements in the workplace can be important forms of self-expression and can produce noteworthy improvements in self-respect and may have a far greater impact on self-expression and self-esteem than on unit cost, price, profits, or quality.

The role of the supervisor, therefore, encompasses not only evoking the full contribution that each individual is capable of, but also recognizing and rewarding the various steps taken in the direction of achieving an individual's full potential. To some extent, self-expression, as with virtue, is its own reward. Even so, recognition and reward are required because human imperfection makes every human being an unreliable judge of his/her individual contributions.

Only a short-sighted supervisor would begrudge individual workers opportunities for self-expression on grounds that such opportunities conflict with the principal objectives of the company. Workers whose need for self-expression is unmet are dissatisfied workers and that, in turn, encourages them to withhold some of their productive energies, to become less efficient, and to be less concerned about quality. Thus, any unresolved conflict between labor and management, whatever its origin, results in an increase in the cost of production, a deterioration in quality, and either a decrease in profits, an increase in price, or both.

### **BELONGING: MEETING THE NEED OF THE SOCIAL BEING FOR WORK AS SUCH THROUGH TEAMWORK**

Sociality, no less than individuality, is at the very core of personhood. Sociality means that in the workplace *person of action* needs to be united with others in a common task not just to accomplish that task more successfully but also to develop more fully as a person. Teamwork, in other words, helps transform economic resources into goods and services and at the same time and even more importantly leads to a further unfolding of human beings as persons. Belonging, no less than self-expression, is critical to personhood.

#### **Teamwork**

Work affords a person an opportunity to produce something of value not only by contributing skills and talents that are uniquely his/hers but also by participating and interacting with others on a common task. Two persons working alongside one another is not teamwork unless there is some

reason for the two to communicate as to how the work is to be done. Proximity is not closeness and membership is not participation.

Lindeman calls teamwork "acting jointly" [Lindeman, p. 112] and Wojtyla insists on "acting jointly with others" [Wojtyla, p. 31]. Given global competition and the economic advantages that attach to the division of labor, teamwork is a *requirement* of the modern workplace.

Teamwork is the intertwined individual contributions of two or more persons toward the production of a good or service such that it is difficult to clearly and completely differentiate one contribution from another and to divide all of the responsibility for the final results among the various individuals involved. Thus, teamwork introduces another duality: responsibility that is both individual and collective.

Teamwork is organized by enlarging human motivation from individual goals pursued competitively to include common goals pursued cooperatively. To be successful, teamwork requires a blending of self-interest and a genuine concern for others. This blending is achieved (if at all) with some difficulty.

Cooperation helps organize the workplace by socializing the individual so that others at work on the same task are viewed as partners. Competition organizes the workplace by paying the largest rewards to the workers with the best performance records. Others, therefore, are viewed as rivals. The blending is difficult precisely because every member of the team must strike a personal balance in the perception of others on the team as partners and as rivals such that the whole may become greater than it otherwise would be through a team-inspired enrichment of the contributions made by the various individual team members. To illustrate, the dynamics of an orchestra in concert may inspire or drive an individual member to a performance level beyond what might be achieved by that individual performing alone. Any failure in this regard means that the whole may become less than that through a team-induced impoverishment of individual contributions.<sup>5</sup>

Teamwork enhances self-expression by enhancing one's endowment (mainly through one-on-one and group on-the-job training). It cannot be otherwise because in the first instance teamwork

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<sup>5</sup> This type of enrichment commonly is known as synergy and impoverishment of this sort typically is called entropy. "Entropy" and "synergy", it appears, are words that derive from physics [Albrecht, pp. 24-25] and are not appropriate to the personalism advocated in these pages. "Enrichment" and "impoverishment", in contrast, are much better suited to personalist economics.

depends on individuals contributing their individual skills and talents and, as stated previously, the very utilization of the endowment makes it self-reproducing.

Whether large or small, complex or simple, all teams have one thing in common: necessity or efficiency. That is, a team may be necessary in the sense that there is no other way to accomplish the task at hand or a team may outperform autonomous individuals on the same task. Additionally, teams may be permanent or ad-hoc, entrepreneurial or managerial, completely contained within a single operating unit or encompass several units in line or in parallel, single-skilled or multi-skilled, self-managed or hierarchically managed. Formally, they may be called natural work groups, field service teams, problem-solving or employee-involvement groups, cross-functional support teams, start-up teams, human resources teams, task forces, and the like [cf. O'Dell, pp. 38ff].

The centrality of both individual effort and teamwork in the workplace argues for a dual system of rewards to separately recognize each. In a real sense, such a system reflects and reinforces the duality in human nature: one part individual being, the other part social being. For purposes of administering the workplace, the dual-rewards system presents the same delicate assignment of balancing between the perception of others in the workplace as rivals and the perception of them as partners. That is, a weighing of competition and cooperation as foundational organizing principles. O'Dell, a consultant to the American Productivity and Quality Center, has found that reward systems have not kept pace with the reorganization of the workplace to emphasize the importance of teamwork. Her first recommendation in modifying reward systems relates directly to minimizing employee competition and to reinforcing cooperation [O'Dell, pp. 38, 45].

There are numerous options available to the company that seeks to reward its workers on the basis of collective effort as well as individual contribution. Gain-sharing is one method that has won some favor in the U.S. although it would be an exaggeration to describe its utilization as wide-spread. For many firms with gain-sharing plans, the financial reward is relatively small alongside the worker's regular earnings. For a few, such as Lincoln Electric which is a Cleveland manufacturer of small electric motors and welding equipment, gain-sharing actually doubles the base-pay of the typical worker [Baldwin]. Cash bonuses tied to achieving pre-determined goals or milestones is another way of recognizing collective effort. An in-kind bonus is a third. A collective "pat-on-the-back" is another form of reward for team performance.

On occasion, the reward for teamwork is rudimentary: the employees get to keep their jobs. That is, sometimes reorganizing the workplace around teamwork is a last-ditch effort by the senior management to protect the financial viability of the enterprise.

## **Belonging**

Just as self-expression is the fruit of individual contribution, belonging proceeds out of teamwork. Belonging is the sense that one is an important member of the team in terms of its ability to accomplish its mission. Dempsey expresses belonging in the language of the typical worker: "...any day I'm missing they scramble around to get my spot covered" [Dempsey, p. 254].

Work has two central actions: thinking and doing. When a person works completely alone and isolated from all other human beings, these two actions by definition are joined. When a person works in the company of others, these two actions may become separated. Indeed, it is not at all unusual in a modern industrial society to assign the thinking to one set of persons (management) and the doing to another (labor) and, furthermore, to identify thinking as a prerogative of management.

People cannot be joined into a team if the two central actions of work divide them. Given that thought precedes action and determines it, the doers inevitably will be regarded as subordinate to the thinkers. Teamwork becomes much more difficult in a work environment where the parties involved are divided into two unequal groups.

Teamwork then depends on management's valuing workers sufficiently as human beings to actively involve them in the decisions as to how the work is to be done. Belonging is the fruit of such valuing. This involvement, which affirms *person of action* as more than a mere instrument of work, provides workers with additional means for effectively caring for one another on a regular basis. Thus, work mates are more likely to be caring toward one another when management is caring toward labor.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Clearly, workers may be caring toward one another when labor and management are pitted against one another as adversaries. That kind of caring, however, is likely to be short-lived because to some extent everyone's capacity and willingness to be caring is depleted by the hostile labor-management relationship. In the same way, workers initially may be caring toward one another during a protracted work stoppage or a large and long-lasting workforce reduction. Under those circumstances, however, emotional and financial stress depletes the personal resources that make caring possible and effective.

In brief, belonging proceeds from teamwork and teamwork proceeds from caring. A person belongs when others care enough to involve him/her not just in doing the work itself but also in thinking about how the work is to be done. Further, caring is possible only when human beings are seen mainly as persons with material needs and not as objects or even as human resources.

Tischner explains the connection between teamwork (which he calls "solidarity") and caring as follows:

... Conscience is the foundation of solidarity, and the stimulus for its development is the cry for help from someone wounded by another human being. Solidarity establishes specific, interpersonal bonds; one person joins with another to tend to one who needs care. I am with you, you are with me, we are together - for him. We - for him. We, not to look at each other, but for him. Which comes first here? Is "we" first, or is "for him" first? The communion of solidarity differs from many other communions in that "for him" is first and "we" comes later. First is the wounded one and the cry of pain. Later, conscience speaks, since it is able to hear and understand this cry. This is all it takes for communion to spring up [Tischner, p. 9].

Caring presupposes not just a willingness to do what is morally right but also a willingness to discern what is right. Calling it "moral perceptivity," Dyck defines the disposition to discern what is right as

the ability to vividly imagine, that is, both to feel and perceive, what other persons feel and need, and how they are, or would be, affected by our attitudes and actions. This ability, when operative, informs our decisions as to whether there are moral claims upon us in a given situation, and if there are, which and how stringent. Thus, as one of the ways in which what is obligatory is revealed to us, this ability or sensitivity is an essential part of what we mean by our sense of obligation. Having a sense of obligation requires or entails having this virtue [Dyck 1973].

Dyck insists that moral perceptivity is essential to caring or love of neighbor and that love of neighbor, in turn, is requisite for human community [Dyck 1977, pp. 110-113]. Since community cannot exist without moral perceptivity and since the individual members have a personal duty under contributive justice to support their community in order to protect the good that they derive

from it, from an Aristotelian-Thomistic perspective moral perceptivity logically precedes contributive justice and informs it.

Belonging means being more secure than one would be if one were entirely alone. Families certainly provide security, but given the centrality of labor income and that families do not control the workplace as they did prior to the industrial revolution, families cannot provide adequate security in the modern age. Teams may become workplace families that provide some assurance that the individual members are not alone in meeting their own physical needs and the needs of their dependents in a market economy. Notice in this regard that some business establishments even call themselves "family." Notice, too, that the root of "company" -- a common word for a business establishment -- refers to persons who break bread together [*Company*, back cover].

Belonging proceeds from teamwork and enhances it and teamwork, in turn, proceeds from caring, that is, from a genuine concern for the needs of the other persons who are members of the team. Caring, in turn, requires a willingness not only to do what is morally right with regard to other persons but also to discern what is right.

At rock bottom, the need of every human being to belong, which if met enhances personhood, is grounded in a special aspect of contributive justice which is called moral perceptivity. This means that belonging is not so much something that others confer. Rather, it is acquired by each individual through his/her willingness to feel and perceive what others feel and need and to be especially sympathetic with regard to their unmet need. Individuals are more likely to be caring toward one another when they see one another not so much as instruments of work but as ends in themselves. See Figure 4.1 for a brief summary of the person of the worker.

**FIGURE 4.1 PERSON OF ACTION: THE PERSON OF THE WORKER**

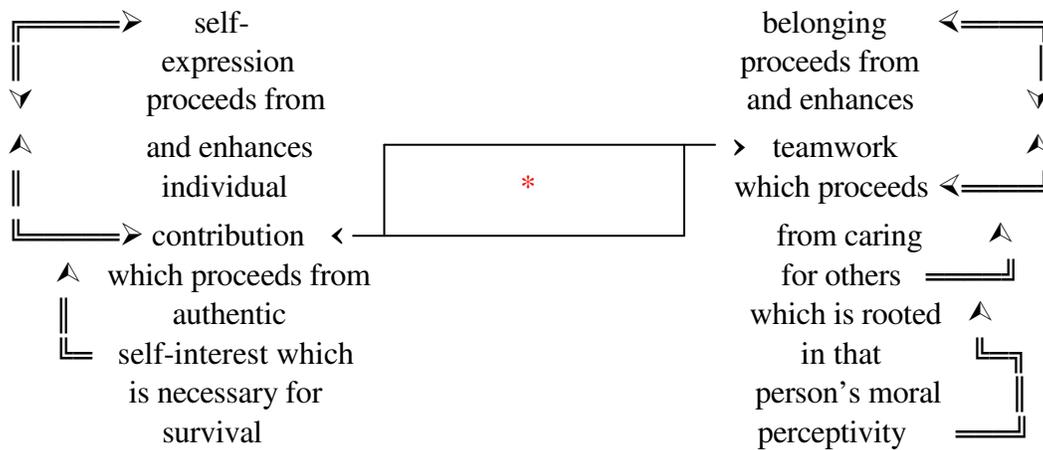
**THE DUALITY OF THE WORKER AND THE NEED FOR WORK AS SUCH**

*Individual Being*

work is an opportunity for human beings to develop more fully as persons by meeting their need for self-expression through their own individual contributions

*Social Being*

work is an opportunity for human beings to develop more fully as persons by meeting their need to belong through the formation of teams in the workplace



====> : *primary motivation & outcome*

—> : *secondary outcome*

<====> : *mutual causality*

**\* : a representation that persons may but do not inevitably develop more fully along one dimension of their dual nature (individual being/social being) at the expense of the other.**

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