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Body and Soul: A Holistic Approach to Hospitality

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1 Introduction

The human being has been defined and described in many ways throughout history. One of the widely accepted definitions of a human being is ‘an individual substance of a rational nature’, which implies that the human individual is a rational being with intellect and free will. That definition originated centuries ago from Boethius’ *Liber De Persona et Duabus Naturis Contra Eutychem Et Nestorium*, but it features in many contemporary discussions on the human person (Bai, 2021; Emery, 2011; Koterski, 2004; Simpson, 1988). In general, scholars describe the human condition as an embodied but essentially spiritual self, emphasizing the need to note that the person is composed of a body animated by a soul (a non-material part of the self). When one analyses the activities of living beings and their needs, one discovers that humans have many biological needs in common with animals. However, one can also see glaring differences between the manner of satisfying those needs in humans. The capacity for thinking and for self-determination, based on what the person understands as good, is a key distinguishing feature of humans among other animals. In fact, humans may decide not to satisfy their biological needs if they have reasons strong enough to do so. For example, many leaders or exemplary personalities driving for change in the society have gone on hunger strikes, refusing meals as a way of protesting against societal ills. Thus, even professionals involved in caregiving need to consider that to care for others is not simply to provide the resources that they need to feed, sleep or satisfy other biological needs. Instead, a more robust approach to professional care will address different aspects of human being including the emotions and the intelligence.

The complexity of the self makes it possible for professionals to approach each person to whom they provide hospitality services on a different level so that they are attended to with creativity. The human being, an embodied self, needs the integral approach which assures a high quality of service. The hospitality professionals, in this process of creating a holistic approach to carrying out their work, will need to practice different virtues and will find opportunities for self-development. When one also sees hospitality at its best in homes, where most people get primary care and support for wellbeing, it becomes even more patent

to emphasize the need for a humanistic paradigm of human interactions that enables people to flourish. The holistic approach to satisfying people's needs based on the different aspects of their condition as human beings, requires some reflections on those dimensions. The first task of this chapter is to present some of those human faculties and suggest ways of reaching them.

2 Some Human Faculties

The human person is a complex multidimensional unity. Each human has both external and internal dimensions. A living being possesses a specific form of cohesion among its component parts, which renders it physically stable (Lombo & Russo, 2014). Each of these dimensions in turn is made up of various faculties or powers of action and has different modes of functioning. In a broad sense, most scholars recognize two aspects of each human being: a body, and a soul or a non-material (non-physical essential feature of humans evidenced by activities that are not purely observable by the senses) (Lombo & Russo, 2014). Throughout history, various scholars in the humanities, including philosophy, the social sciences and the practical sciences have made proposals for understanding the complexity of the aspects that are constitutive of a human being. Prominent among those schools of thought include various dualists who advocated for favouring one of two human dimensions (the body or the soul) over the other. When one favours bodily concerns as if it were the only component of human beings, one loses sight of a unity of the person described in earlier chapters. In the same way, when one focusses only on the spiritual dimension ignoring the bodily concerns, one has another reductionist, incomplete view of the person (Sanguinetti, 2015). For example, it is possible to render services that cater only for biological needs such as satisfying hunger, forgetting that the client has an intelligent dimension that requires that one communicates the reasons behind the choice of meals presented, gives an assurance that the meal has been prepared in hygienic conditions. The aesthetic appeal of the food matters too and this requires the gift of creativity on the part of the professional. In order to attend to the needs of others, one should

be able to recognize those needs. It is therefore necessary to present the key dimensions which are often directly served by the hospitality professional.

Historically, the human being is described as a complex unity of a body (Aristotle, 1962) and a soul which gives it life. The different manifestations and powers of operations of each of the dimensions work together so that the person can attain their goals. Within the body, the five external senses are key features of humans that bring us in direct contact with the different objects and people around us, including the service provided by hospitality professional. The objects perceived through the external senses tend to move us internally to be inclined to react in different ways. These internal motions are felt passively as an attraction towards what we perceived with our senses, or repulsion from those things. Our emotions are the baseline for our affective dimension, and they arise spontaneously within us as we encounter various items in the world. The emotions cannot be directly wished away, but they can be managed by the spiritual, non-material faculties of operation which reside in a soul (the life-giving principle of the body which is an essential part of the person from the moment it comes into existence (Brock, 2005). The intelligent capacity and the voluntary control of our choices and actions are attributed to the soul. They are however inseparable from the body as the human is a complex unity that cannot be radically separated into parts that do not commune with each other.

The implications of the above analysis of the unity within complexity of humanity are that one needs to engage different dimensions of the person they have before them when interacting with them for different reasons including professional services. For the purpose of this chapter, the emphasis of an integral approach to care will be based on a classification of the needs according to the dimensions described earlier. Consequently, the chapter begins by exploring the biological needs of the person and an access to the solutions to those needs through the senses. The psychological and affective needs of the guests or clients of hospitality is another topic that needs to be addressed. Even though it falls out of the scope of the tasks of a professional caregiver or other hospitality professional to satisfy all the affective needs of the person, one

cannot underestimate the effects of managing clients' affectivity effectively, whether by emotional intelligence or by simply acquiring and living the virtues of social life. The guest, being a rational agent and often with the capacity to use the intellectual faculty, can also be served by meeting up with standards demanded by intelligent planning and creative solutions to their needs. In that sense, one can speak of intellectual needs to be met by the professional approach and the praxis of the firms that are dedicated to providing such services.

3 Appealing to the Senses

Humans begin to perceive the world around us and engage in a relationship with it through the use of our senses. The senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch are basic bodily faculties that are important for relating with the objects around and with other humans. It is generally accepted that the inactivity or damage to any of the senses is a significant loss to the person. The fact that there are many contemporary research centres whose purpose is to investigate ways of restoring any of these organs to health whenever they are damaged is proof of their importance for human wellbeing. It should then not be surprising that each professional field dedicated to caring and centred around care for the person's sense of wellbeing, especially hospitality and tourism, should be interested in enabling their clients or guests to reach their targets by appealing to their sense perceptions.

In addition, the aesthetic experience is one of the aspects of fulfilment and exercising the capacity for appreciation of beauty can enhance one's sense of wellbeing. In addition, exercising one's capacity for excellence and practicing leisure activities that enable one to practice some skills, are other ways of contributing to wellbeing that can be enhanced by the protocols and creativity in hospitality services and in welcoming tourists. For these, one can help the guest to feel at home by preparing an attractive sensorial experience in their first contact with the professional's work. What they see, smell, hear, touch and taste maybe the source of their appreciation of the care and concern for their wellbeing shown by the hospitality professional on a large or small scale. It is important to

note that the hospitality professional described in this chapter includes those who are employed as caregivers and those who care for others natural consequence of the duties and rights of being in a family and contributing to the wellbeing of its members.

The first impressions are often created through what is generally observable by the senses. With the sense of sight, one can enable the client to live the aesthetic experience with the carefully laid out linen, attractive food presentation, colourful decor, neatness and orderly arrangement of spaces, venues and homes etc.

The specifics of what one does to prepare the guest's sense of hearing will depend on the context in which hospitality services are being provided. The requirements for a tourist centre with wildlife and games reserves would be different from those of an events centre for parties. The texture and appropriate level of sound in a fancy restaurant will differ from that in fast food eatery and would certainly differ from the sounds in the dining room of a family home. Classical music may be appropriate for a retirement party for a professor of arts and music, such may however not be appreciated in a traditional folkloric or cultural display in an African setting. It is impossible to give specific recommendations for the sonography for different events as each situation is unique and the purposes and settings of events are very diverse. It is enough to point out that one must consider what best suits the hearing of the persons who are present and what best gives them the sense of wellbeing.

Taste is an indispensable sense to please for culinary art, wines, cocktails and other drinks. Paying attention to the taste so that it is exquisite is a detail of care and respect for the person to whom food is served. One can therefore see the chance to please a palate as chance to put a smile on the face of a fellow human being and thus lighten their burdens and ease their toils to achieve great goals with the moments of respite and temporary wellbeing that goes with good tastes of edible things.

The aroma of food, the scents of perfumes and natural fragrance of outdoor settings are different factors that can be curated in a bid to reach the person through their sense of smell. The texture of linen, of fabric, upholstery can be pleasing to the sense of touch. In taking care of these aspects that appeal to the senses, one has access to the person's heart and mind.

It is important to note that the care of the senses is only the beginning of showing one's respect for the dignity of the guests one attends. It is however an indispensable beginning as one reaches the affectivity and ultimately progresses to reach the intelligence. One's ward, guest, client, child, etc., can begin to get an insight to how much one values them through their observation of the care and attention one places in the external features of care immediately available to the reach of the senses. One can attain a more robust collaboration with a person's quest for flourishing by reaching beyond the senses, to the affectivity and intelligence, in the necessary depth.

4 Embodied and Passionate

The passions and emotions are our internal responses to our contact with the external world through the sense experiences. These emotions occur within the professional and the person receiving the services. Examples include fear, surprise, joy, anger, etc. One of the steps in learning how to manage people and their emotions is learning to manage oneself. Emotional intelligence, made popular by Daniel Goleman, is very important for hospitality practices as it helps to understand and manage oneself and to be aware of the emotional needs of others and be able to manage them (Goleman, 1996). Achieving harmony with others is one of the fundamental aspects of fulfilment and flourishing and managing one's emotions is one of the ways. In fact, our emotions play a far greater role in reasoning, decision-making and individual success than it is commonly acknowledged. Their importance for professional success becomes even more obvious when people work in teams or have to meet with others and work or interact with them. In business transactions, mutual trust and confidence in a person's capabilities are important for long lasting relationships. Building such trust often begins with managing one's emotions and understanding those of the people one will work with.

It is not enough to cater for the person's biological needs and attract them to one's services by ensuring that the services are attractive for the senses. It is also important to help the person feel that they have been

considered worthy of receiving such high-quality service. That feeling which comes with the recognition of human dignity, and the respect towards the guest, is one that can facilitate their perception of fulfilment and gratitude. In that light, a simple smile could be psychologically more valuable than the most expensive dish on the menu.

The balance between thinking and feeling while carrying out one's daily tasks or interacting with people helps one maintain a robust approach to the practice of the profession. Our basic emotions which we often need to control include anger, sadness, joy and fear. Emotional intelligence has different recognized components that are essential for effectively managing the affective aspects of desires, feelings and emotions. Some of the components such as self-awareness, self-regulation and motivation affect the self, while others are concerned with their interaction with others e.g. empathy, social skills, recognizing emotions in others, etc.

Professionals who are self-aware recognize their own emotions and identify how they affect their thoughts, actions and behaviour. In addition, they know their strengths and weaknesses, and have self-confidence. With a developed capacity for self-regulation and self-management, one gains control over impulsive feelings and behaviours and can manage their emotions in healthy ways. They can take initiative, follow through on commitments, and adapt to changing circumstances.

With social awareness, one can understand the feelings, needs, concerns and interests of other people, perceive emotional cues, feel comfortable socially and recognize the power dynamics in different contexts. These features enable one to develop and manage good relationships and to communicate clearly. Even in circumstances where professionals do not foresee continuity of patronage, for example within tourist settings where clients are just passing by, possessing and practising those emotional intelligence skills can lead to referrals of other clients to them. Practising good habits also helps the professionals to grow as persons, making them excellent in their work and as a person.

Proper management of our emotions, and our responses to those of others, contribute greatly to the sense of wellbeing that comes from being in harmony with others. Many times, the management of emotions will occur with the use of the intelligence while integrating feelings under its

direction of choices and actions. This means individuals can choose to do what is best for them and for others, even when they do not feel like doing so. It becomes easier to make such choices when the professional clearly understands their implications for personally desired goals and for the good goals of clients. The intelligence plays other roles in professional work and will be further explored.

5 The Intelligence Satisfied

In organizing one's work as a professional in any field, one needs to think through the available options, plan and study the feasibility of each possibility. One cannot doubt the role of sound logic in providing service and care. It is therefore unsurprising that the hospitality professional has to have a high level of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These skills come in quite handy since hosts have to deal with equally rational beings. Within interactions, explanations and intelligent dialogue, clients can come to understand that they are valued, as they experience the host's manner of respectful communication and creative solutions to their challenges while attending to their requests.

The order with which food is presented, the thought and smart designs in arranging the flow of guests in a banquet, and the preparation of dishes in a way and order that makes it easy to have them served at parties or on a family table, are tasks that require a lot of intellectual abilities. Not everyone has the flair for caring for such details that do not escape the critical and observant eyes of a knowledgeable guest. The professional who puts in a lot of effort and creativity when planning everything that their guests need will do well for themselves in intellectual growth in resourcefulness and also show the nobility of the profession. Knowledgeable guests notice and appreciate when a lot of smart planning and thought has gone into the hospitality they experience. Those who are not so knowledgeable learn and are often grateful for the information gained from the interactions with the hospitality professional.

One can also enrich the knowledge and cultural formation of guests by providing information and experiences that enhance learning about new places, history, traditional events, architecture, etc. Some tourist sites

provide an aspect of cultural education in the hospitality services they offer. Such sites include agricultural resorts, wine presses, food processing farms, institutes of research in agriculture, etc. Hygiene protocols, organization skills and problem-solving skills also appeal to intelligence of the visitors. Another aspect that is intricately connected to the intelligence is the capacity to choose what one understands to be best for them. Hospitality services will do well then to have a variety of options from which guests can make choices for their wellbeing.

Scholars have explained that it is logical and intelligent to believe in a supreme being to whom humans owe their existence. Human intelligence is often thought to be the mirror of divinity, and the awareness of the connection with the supernatural makes humans feel the need to connect with the divine in religion. Spirituality is a topic of discussion in many intellectual circles within the debates about the ultimate reason and purpose of human existence and the purpose of the beings on earth. Many humans have a sense of religiosity or spirituality. Studies in positive psychology show that spirituality is a character sense and its practice leads to an increased sense of wellbeing and human flourishing (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Considering that spirituality and religion are essential aspects of human fulfilment, it is important that the hospitality professional respects the customer's religious beliefs and tries to ensure that the ambience is such that guests can practice their religion as long it does not involve activities that are intrinsically harmful to themselves and others.

The challenges in the environment, including natural disasters, pandemics, economic difficulties, etc., can be opportunities for creativity. Unforeseen challenges can become drivers of innovation. The recent pandemic has necessitated a spur in creative ideas for the hospitality industry. The original ideas that arise in the attempt to solve crises are impressive and attract praise and recognition of the intelligence of hospitality professionals. Whoever needs to use the new ideas appreciates the critical thinking that has gone into home-grown solutions for those challenges. For example, the catering services for hospitals have had to find ways of coping with increased demands and would have to study ways of improving their work processes in order to cope with the situation. In addition to creativity, there are character strengths and virtues in which the professional can grow and the next section explores them with a focus on some virtues.

6 Personal Development

From the earlier discussions on the holistic approach to service, it may seem that the focus is primarily on the benefits for the recipient of the service. One may then wonder what the professional gains while engaging in the integral approach to caregiving. In reality, the actions carried out shape the acting person (Wojtyła, 1979). In fact, philosophers have argued that humans constantly create themselves with their choices and actions. As such, humans are said to be continuously involved in the task of self-creation, weaving their identities and life stories with more or less awareness of doing so (Gahl, 2001; MacIntyre, 2016; Ogunyemi, 2014). Repetition of good acts leads to the formation of good habits. The practice of good habits which enable one to attain the good goals of life are virtues (MacIntyre, 2013). Such habits and virtues inform one's character and identity. Attaining the goals described above requires the exercise of the cardinal virtues which have been discussed in other chapters of this book. Those cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance are the hinge on which many other virtues hang.

A group of virtues that are particularly important for social life and other types of interpersonal relationships are found in Aristotle's discussion of virtues in *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, 1962). Scholars over the years have called the group of virtues, the relational or social virtues. Social virtues, especially amiability, gentleness, tact, good wittiness or humour are important for professional hospitality services. Other similar virtues include liberality, gratitude, honour, magnificence, magnanimity or greatness of mind, good temperedness and humility.

The practice of the acts of the virtues listed above can promote harmony with others which is an essential part of human fulfilment. There is no doubt that an amiable hospitality professional is easier to approach and helps one to relax and enjoy such services. The amiable person is easy to approach, they are friendly and will socialize with people appropriately. They are pleasant with no ulterior purpose. Good humour helps one to avoid being overwhelmed by the demands and difficulties of daily tasks. The capacity to judge when to joke, and to what extent such amusement is necessary is helpful for professionals. It is the mark of a tactful person to say and listen to such things as befit a good and

courteous person. Aristotle, in his discourse on virtues within his book *Nicomachean Ethics*, observed that there are topics that one can joke about and some that cannot be used in humorous tones or contexts. He adds that the cultured and refined person's jesting is not vulgar or improper, and that the jokes of educated persons differ from those of the uneducated (Aristotle, 1962). It is then necessary for hospitality professionals to avoid vulgarity in the attempt to entertain their guests and clients.

Similarly, good temperedness is a virtue that helps one to take control of difficult situations, help clients relax and enjoy and is thus a virtue that can be recommended for hospitality professionals. One can agree with Aristotle that the good-tempered person tends to be unperturbed and not to be led by passion or emotions. This however does not mean that such a person is never angry or upset, but they can be reasonably angry in the manner, at the things, and for the length of time that is appropriate, such that they do not dwell on offences for too long or too short a duration (Aristotle, 1962). The even-tempered professionals can master their emotions and give good services even in difficult times. They are not resentful, but rather tend to make allowances for people's mistakes. Such an attitude is invaluable in a setting where human interactions often expose one to the frustrations of others, sometimes making the professional vulnerable to transferred frustrations. It is important to note that one must manage unjust or harmful attacks with the necessary caution. Being even-tempered is not a reason to expose oneself to dangers of verbal or other forms of abuse. The truly virtuous even-tempered person will find an alternative solution to returning anger for anger but will ultimately find a good solution to avoid being a victim of abuse.

When instructions are politely and clearly given, the guest appreciates the clarity. However, it would be important to present the ideas in a way that does not project the impression that one thinks the guest is a simpleton. Respectful communication is important to professionalism. Even when the topic of discussion is the field of expertise of the professional, people appreciate it when information is politely and cordially transmitted to them. At the base of this attitude is intellectual humility

which every professional needs. The humility to work well without excessive showing off allows the recipients of excellent service to applaud the professional.

The virtue of liberality, also discussed in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, means that the person gives generously even when they are aware that the recipient may never be able to repay the invaluable service. There are a variety of options of possibilities of what the person may give, for example, it may be time or economic benefits. Exerting effort to be creative in presenting food to people, going the extra mile to finish one's work excellently and exceeding expectations are other ways of living liberality. The liberal person, like other virtuous people, will give for the sake of the noble, they are generous because it is good to be so. They will give to the right people, the right amounts, and at the right time, with all the other qualifications that accompany right giving.

One cannot overemphasize the need to grow in several other virtues. This section of the chapter touches on only a few of the virtues which are directly related to interpersonal relations as often occur with hospitality services. Each professional will need to practice other virtues which have been described in the other chapters of this book. The people who provide services that are connected to hospitality and tourism can intentionally develop themselves and grow in all virtues, making themselves excellent in character while doing their work. Such development requires a personal recognition for the dignity of the self as a professional with many great possibilities of making an impact in the lives of those one works for or with, and a recognition of the dignity of those to whom one provides services.

7 Concluding Thoughts

The holistic approach to the person in hospitality and tourism described above, is a hallmark of service that recognizes the dignity of the recipient of the service as well as that of the person who provides the service. In order to achieve that robust approach, one needs person-centred service. All the persons involved in the dynamics of the hospitality

setting, whether they provide services or receive them, benefit from this approach.

On the part of the hospitality professional, focusing on the different dimensions of the client is a sign of being able to reflect and intelligently create packages that are what that client needs in a personalized manner. Personalized service, in this sense, does not necessarily require hours of study of each individual. Instead, it means that the professional has acquired a certain aptitude for identifying the general needs of their clients and can tell what would appeal to each one integrally. On the part of the client, the person-centred approach recognizes their dignity and the effort made to meet their various needs gives an idea of how much they are valued. For a guest or a client, the service then goes beyond a temporary solution of challenges of accommodation, feeding, etc., as it touches on questions of a genuine concern for humanity. The training of hospitality professionals can include raising an awareness of the need to recognize humans as equals in dignity, worthy of the care they are receiving. Trainers can also help such professionals to value their work and realize that it is a job that requires not only technical skills, but also a balanced personality, emotional intelligence, creativity and other intellectual and social skills.

It is possible to have a humanistic framework at the base of hospitality services on a way that it manifests in the practicalities of relating with the customers and providing what they need. A critical review of the processes of providing hospitality services and of caring for others, in homes, hospitals, resorts, etc., can greatly enrich the work with a humanistic basis. The human touch in jobs requiring interpersonal relations cannot be reduced to the technical skills alone. While assessing the excellence of hospitality professionals and the services provided, it is important to evaluate the attention they pay to the different dimensions of the human being.

Action Prompts

- Draw up a plan for integrating creativity and a social virtue into the work plan for a selected hospitality process.

- Describe the plan to your colleagues and discuss ways in which your team can enrich work processes with elements from the holistic approach.

Study Questions

1. What aspects of the human person can a hospitality professional appeal to with their work?
2. How can each of the dimensions of the person be valued and taken into consideration when planning and delivering hospitality services?
3. In what ways does the holistic approach to hospitality services influence the development of the professional? Give examples of three virtues that professionals can acquire and explain a scenario in which these virtues can be practiced.

Chapter Summary

The preceding chapters explored the unity of the human person and the different aspects of our wellbeing. This chapter addresses the theoretical and practical implications of the coordination of the different human faculties for an integral approach to hospitality services. Hospitality services can have an impact on the bodily, affective and intellectual dimensions of people.

With regard to our affectivity, the virtues described by Aristotle for social life are particularly relevant to professionalism in hospitality. The individuals in the industry, as part of their all-round development, should acquire virtues including some that make social life better, for example, amiability, liberality, wit, etc. There are different ways of appealing to the affectivity from the perspective of the host and of the guests, and managing affectivity well is a hallmark of emotional intelligence, a sought-after feature in professionals from many fields.

The appeal to the senses is often the object of evaluation and a key component of identifying the quality of hospitality services. For an inexperienced assessor, the appeal to the senses may be the main reference point for measurement of success or standardization of processes. This chapter presents a case for a more robust approach to interpersonal relations within hospitality and tourism by showcasing opportunities to reach the whole person on different aspects of our existence as embodied and spiritual agents. The integral approach emphasizes self-development for the professional while reaching out to making a deeper connection with the recipients of their services.

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