

SEVEN STEPS TO HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FUTURE

The septenary approach is not uncommon to Theosophists. Here is one.

Step 1 – Unity of Purpose

The pursuit of truth and the practice of universal brotherhood are the two pillars at the entrance to a Theosophical life. The motto and the objects of the Theosophical Society constantly reinforce and reiterate the direction in which to move. Of the greatest importance are the Mahachohan's letter of 1881 and the Mahatma's letter to Annie Besant in 1900. Unity of purpose among the members of the TS is a prerequisite to spreading the message of universal brotherhood in the world. In a letter of 1884, the Mahatma says, "Each one individually and collectively has to be *utterly unselfish*, kind and full of good will towards each other at least—leaving humanity out of the question; there must be no party spirit among the band, no backbiting, no ill will, or envy or jealousy, contempt or anger." This is no easy task, but it is the only choice for any honest member. Another adept once wrote, "You have to make once for ever your choice—either your duty to the Lodge or your own personal ideas." For this, *Viveka* or *Discrimination* needs to be developed through mindfulness.

Step 2 – The Strategic Objective

We are asked to "popularize a knowledge of Theosophy". This is the strategic objective. It can be accomplished only by precept and practice. This means that we should encourage a diligent study of Theosophy and make it known that all are welcome to the TS without having to "convert".

Step 3 – Transactional & Tactical Aspects

To complement the strategic aspects of study and dissemination, we need to look at some practical aspects. A Master once wrote, "One who prepares for solving the *Infinite* must solve the *finite* first." Let us consider, in turn, three Ps --- [a] People, [b] Publications & Presentations and [c] Property.

[a] People

There is a debate about quality versus quantity. It is not a matter of doubt that quality is very important. Notwithstanding, the usefulness of numbers should never be downplayed. If we looked at the following matrix it will clarify our perception.

Greater numbers Lesser commitment	Greater numbers Greater commitment
Lesser numbers Lesser commitment	Lesser numbers Greater commitment

We should ensure that we move towards the upper right quadrant and never slip into the lower left quadrant or even the upper left quadrant. The right move cannot be achieved either by a mere membership drive or by spreading ourselves thin with many activities. Good members and staff are to be cared for in every way.

[b] Publications & Presentations

New publications, reprints and translations of Theosophical texts and articles should continue and be enhanced. E-publishing, Internet sites, broadcasts, public presentations and documentary films should be encouraged and CDs and books should be made available at popular bookshops and book fairs.

[c] Property

Perhaps the most mundane and yet an important aspect of our work is the protection and care of TS properties. The magnetism of the meeting place should be kept safe and sacred. Many Theosophists have given generously to the TS. Members and well-wishers should support the efforts in every way.

Step 4 – Building Trust & System

Our attention is drawn to the rules, systems and procedures. While it may be important to adapt to changing times, it is also important to be aware of the fact that a mere change of rules does not guarantee adherence to them. It is important to have a near perfect system, but we cannot do so without a high degree of trust. While the system is the ethical body of any organisation, trust is its ethical soul. Let us look at another matrix here.

High Trust Low System	High Trust High System
Low Trust Low System	Low Trust High System

As we can rest assured that we will never slip into the lower left quadrant, we must also never move into the lower right quadrant. Instead we must move into the upper right quadrant.

Step 5 – Understanding Freedom & Discipline

Freedom and discipline seem to contradict each other. Paradoxically each ensures the existence of the other. Whether it is in terms of our own behaviour or in terms of the organisation's rules and norms, we need to understand both. It is indeed the age for a consultative and participative style of functioning. Inclusiveness should be practised and exclusiveness should be avoided. A Mahatma once wrote about the "wreck and desolation" of nations: "It is *selfishness* and *exclusiveness* that killed ours, and it [*is*] *selfishness* and *exclusiveness* that will kill yours."

Step 6 – Principles & Methods

We need to be clear about the difference between principles and methods. This clarity will resolve the debate on centralization versus decentralization. If the central principles of our organisation are clear, the methods of implementation can be decentralized. If these principles are in some cases implicit, it is important to make them explicit and understandable.

Step 7 – The Three Halls of Theosophy

There are people who wish to battle the ills of the world by practical service. There are also people who like rituals and ceremonies. There are allied organisations of the TS that provide opportunities to both sorts of people. The TOS offers an excellent avenue for practical work, while there are other organisations that offer avenues for ceremonial work. This is the first hall of Theosophy.

For those who wish to study Theosophy and address the moral and spiritual sufferings of the world, The Theosophical Society itself offers the second hall of Theosophy.

Madame H. P. Blavatsky, like her successors, spoke of discipleship, which is the path leading to the vow of the Bodhisattva. Krishnamurti spoke of "freedom from the known". Many speak of Blavatsky and Krishnamurti being different. The language is different, the teaching is one. If you do not give up your identification with the known, how can you be a disciple? To those disciples who seek freedom from the known and who wish to embark on the Bodhisattva path of renunciation, the third hall of Theosophy is open.

It is our duty to bring people across the threshold into the three halls.

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