



Information Summary-
"People of the Lie" by M. Scott Peck
Arrow, 1990, ISBN 0 09 972860 5

This book sets out the beginning of developing a psychology of evil; amongst the key thoughts expressed in this book are the differences between what the writer sees as natural evil, human evil and non-human evil. The problem of good is explored, along with the problem of evil, a Christian is defined as a person Jesus would be comfortable with and evil is "live" spelt backward. It is the view of the author that evil is a destructive force whereas good is seen as a wholesome, cleansing agent that restores, heals and enriches the living of life.

The following quotes from the book pick up these and other thoughts, concepts and ideas explored in this book :-

Page 10

"We cannot begin to hope to heal human evil until we are able to look at it directly."

"The battle to heal human evil always begins at home."

Page 135

"Evil was defined as the use of power to destroy the spiritual growth of others for the purpose of defending and preserving the integrity of our own sick selves. We scapegoat not the strong but the weak."

Page 143

"An illness or disease is any defect in the structure of our bodies or personalities that prevents us from fulfilling our potential as human beings"

Page 144

“The designation of evil as a disease also obligates us to approach the evil with compassion. By their nature, the evil inspire in us more of a desire to destroy than to heal, to hate than to pity. While these natural reactions serve to protect the uninitiated, they otherwise prevent any possible solution. I do not think we will come any closer than we are today to understanding and, I hope, curing human evil until the healing professions name evil as an illness within the domain of their professional responsibility.”

Page 146

“In addition to the abrogation of responsibility that characterises all personality disorders, this one (evil) would specifically be distinguished by :-

- (a) consistent, destructive, behaviour, which may often be quite subtle
- (b) excessive, albeit usually covert, intolerance of criticism and other forms of narcissistic injury
- (c) pronounced concern with a public image and self -image of respectability, contributing to a stability of life style but also to pretentiousness and denial of hateful feelings or vengeful motives
- (d) intellectual deviousness, with an increased likelihood of a mild schizophrenic like disturbance of thinking at times of stress

Page 184

“The utter failure to submit oneself to reality is called autism. The word comes from the Greek root ‘auto’, meaning ‘self’. The person who is autistic is oblivious to certain essential dimensions of reality. Such people literally live in a world of their own in which the self reins supreme.”

Page 187

“Autism is narcissism in its ultimate form. For the complete narcissist, others have no more reality than a piece of furniture”

Page 236

“Satan has no power except in a human body”

Page 237

“.....the only power that Satan has is through human belief in its lies”

Page 255

“As I have said elsewhere, one measure—and perhaps the best measure— of a person’s greatness is the capacity for suffering. “

Page 281

“Evil is the inevitable concomitant of free will, the price we pay for our unique human power of choice.”

Page 288

“As a nation and as a race, we shall not be immune to war until such time as we have made much further progress towards eradicating from our human nature the twin progenitors of evil : laziness and narcissism”.