

The 5 Core Capacities



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5 Core Capacities

Introduction

All life wants to grow and develop!

We humans develop in five basic areas, the *physical*, *mental*, *emotional*, *creative* and *spiritual* areas. This **model of five realms** shows our versatile talents, experiences, aspirations, skills and our development of consciousness – in other words, our capacities. That is why we call them the five core capacities.



A look at our *Western world* shows that **human education** is mainly focused on the *mental* sphere, which is clearly revealed in *René Descartes'* statement «I think, therefore I am!». The *physical* realm is also increasingly taken into account in the form of fitness, sport and healthy nutrition, whereas the *spiritual* realm plays a marginal role in social discourse, because we banish everything spiritual and religious almost exclusively to the private sphere. In between is the *creative* sphere, which is receiving more attention through stars in literature, film and the music business or in architecture, theatre and dance. That leaves the *emotional* realm, which we sometimes experience as largely confusing and diffuse, whether in raptures, stirring outbursts of emotion, unconscious fears or by largely ignoring or repressing feelings. – This results in an immense **imbalance** in the five core capacities, which is easily recognisable and noticeable in all areas of society, such as the health, education and economic systems.

Holistic human education, as we also strive for at Caribou Azores, on the other hand, promotes all five core capacities *equally*. Because everything changes, adapts to changes and thus strives for a new level of development, we consider personal development and inner growth as the basis of life, i.e. life is learning! It is a *conscious* learning process through joy or unconscious learning, which sometimes happens through joy but often also through painful experiences.

For us, holistic human formation means learning to connect consciously: with myself (*self-love/ self-care and self-reliance*) with other people (*empathy, hospitality, altruism, tolerance*) and to communicate openly with them and to feel uplifting, mental concepts, emotional harmony and balance connected with nature and the «universal/divine». I want to become free, to free myself from everything that hinders this development: constricting *mental* patterns, *emotional* hurts and fears, etc. and what promotes this development: uplifting *mental* concepts, *emotional* harmony and balance. – On this path of development, I am constantly becoming more consciously *open*, *more alert*, *more spontaneous*, *more creative*, *more curious* and more *in the moment*, i.e. more *in the here and now*.

In each area, a human being deserves support, a framework and structure to help them grow. The following five blog posts attempt to bring the five core capacities closer.

We are glad to enable transformative experiences.

The Physical Core Capacity

On the *physical* level it is about solid structures, clear forms and about being grounded, steady and *standing on the ground/in life with both feet*. Our earth, our everyday life and our body are endowed with beauty, with joy, comfort and cosiness in this 3rd dimension; but just as inevitably afflicted by sorrows and worries, limitations and burdens of this material existence.

Matter and *mother* have the same Indo-Germanic language root: *mater* – objects and things that have form and shape. By their very nature, these cannot be "made/fabricated" but figuratively must be "born", a growth process that takes time, a lot of time in fact. Therefore, this *physical* realm is rather slow, but all the more enduring, persistent and preserving, as fossils, for example, prove.



The **earth** is our home, as is our **body**. I can treat both carelessly and ignore their needs, even exploit them, or consciously protect, cherish and nourish them with love and care. The Azores, where the power of the earth is tangible and palpable, with their rich fauna and flora, offer ideal conditions to feel the body and to experience and enjoy the earth: here I can hike and swim or engage in other invigorating pursuits such as dolphin and whale watching, inhale the refreshing sea breeze* or allow my body to rest comfortably, relax and unwind in a warm natural pool, meditate or do yoga. And the beneficial forces of nature from **stones**, **plants**, **animals** and the **ancestors** are omnipresent and offer support in a natural manner.

At *Caribou Azores*, we foster health through simple, conscious nutrition, as well as enough exercise, rest and sleep. The beauty of the island is also reflected in the design and maintenance of the selected guest house, which is carefully kept so that one feels comfortable, feels the harmony, likes to get up in the morning, likes to spend time together, eat, exchange with other guests in the same life situation, or otherwise being active – and by the time it is evening one feels enriched and likes to rest in this oasis.

* The iodine-rich sea air stimulates the metabolism, which explains increased appetite, and has a calming effect on the nervous system, which helps the quality of sleep as well. The rich salt and oxygen content of the air may help dissolve mucus in the respiratory system, allowing to breathe more deeply.

The Mental Core Capacity

The «human mind»* is driven by curiosity and a thirst for knowledge and therefore wants to learn. It plays a key role in our western civilisation, which is characterised by a logical-rational world view, and is promoted massively like no other of the 5 core capacities, which unfortunately leads to great inequality in all social systems. Originating in the transition from an agricultural to an industrial society in the age of industrialisation and the Enlightenment (around 1670 to 1840), this rational and reason-led world view brought enormous intellectual achievements and technical progress: for example the democratisation of politics through several parties, a new pedagogy and academies, countless discoveries and inventions, as well as a new humanism, which was first enshrined in human rights in 1789.



Since then, **mental** demands have increased to such an extent that in today's highly technologised and digitally coded world, people are needed who are rationally competent, mentally well-informed, linear and independent thinkers, and at the same time critical citizens. In this time, in which only rational arguments, proven facts, data and statistics count, which are *interpreted* and *explained* by science, the label "reasonable", "normal", "adult" and "innovative" are the mantra of our times. For this reason, we presuppose or even take for granted an *understanding of causal thinking* – of *cause and effect*.

Yet can scientific methods and analyses of material parts contribute to solving complex challenges, to curbing destructive forces of nature, ego- and structural forces, and to unveiling new realities and perspectives? – Yes, they can! And they could do so much more effectively and be at their best if they proactively involved the other four core capacities! Science can lead to great **wonder** and **appreciation** of the whole environment and mankind, and to upholding and nurturing the gifts, talents and abilities of every living being, large and small.

In the *Azores*, the refreshing sea breeze helps to clear the head, making it easier to keep the mind open and alert. In addition, *Caribou Azores* supports different kinds of thought-provoking impulses during the daily impulse series in the afternoons. This promotes the original agility and dynamism of the mind, which gains further zeal and vigour through various activities and impulses from nature on São Miguel. This enables to let go of constricting belief systems and mental hamster wheels and can help to cultivate knowledge and wisdom as well as new philosophies and strategies that enrich and further the path of life.

* The "human mind" can be seen in a simplified way as the intersection of various mental capacities: cognitive processes, which include functions such as perception, memory, logical reasoning, orientation, the ability to judge associated with reason, etc. All these processes always involve (mostly) unconscious, emotional abilities, because the 5 core capacities are not 5 isolated areas since human beings are holistic beings.

The Emotional Core Capacity

The emotional world is like a universe: it can be as fragrant, light and multifaceted as a bouquet of flowers, as rich and tempting as a feast, as nourishing, comfortable and cozy as an oasis, or as deep, quiet, sparkling and full of longing as a starry sky. – However, this inner world can also appear impenetrable, engulfing and even dangerous like a jungle, or monotonous, monochrome and barren like a desert, accompanied by unpredictable, earthquake-like, roiling eruptions like a volcano, or terrifying, confusing and disturbing like a hall of mirrors.

Devoting oneself to the **flow of emotions** seems natural and easy in the Azores, because here one is surrounded by water, waves and the sea; in addition, hot springs bubble up and waterfalls splash into emerald-green natural pools in some places; simply allow oneself **to be deeply touched** by diverse natural spectacles, e.g. reflecting volcanic lakes, of delicacies at the market, e.g. local pineapple, the wide horizon and the shining stars, the people in the group with similar life circumstances/fate, the silence in the guesthouse from the 17th century. There is hardly a feeling that could not be expressed here. – Feelings are always valid and deserve our full attention, as does expressing them adequately and in an age-appropriate manner.

Perceiving feelings, recognising them, feeling them within oneself, accepting inner tensions and needs, making room for them and sometimes also enduring them, standing by them and expressing them according to the situation, but not identifying with them, is a valuable learning process that we support at *Caribou Azores*. Depending on the needs of the group, accompanying persons and/or suitable experts can offer valuable impulses and deepen the process through advice.

Those who set out on the path to their feelings, in this process overcoming blockades and fears, neither ignoring nor repressing their feelings, e.g. going through a mourning process*, can feel more spontaneity, childlike playfulness, love, compassion, connectedness and joy in a longer, inner growth process and draw from their own wealth of feelings – these are the *gifts of becoming*.



* *Grieving process:* • denying what has happened, not wanting to admit it, breaking down • slowly accepting what is happening • allowing powerlessness and anger to take hold • feeling pain and grief • feel and express the need for protection, security and warmth • the search for a way out, for the light at the end of the tunnel • conscious decision for a "life thereafter" • appreciation and thanks for what has been experienced • healing through forgiveness and reconciliation • reorientation with new behavioral possibilities that prove themselves in everyday reality – for short periods of time there may be regressions to previous phases of the grieving process. The full weight of the grief can be there again, but these phases usually subside relatively quickly so that the next step on the path of healing follows

The Creative Core Capacity

In this core capacity, all 4 other core capacities strive together at the same time in the most comprehensive harmony and balance possible, as can be seen in **art**, for example. **Emotional** expression is combined with **mental** concepts and **physical** mastery. And not infrequently, **spiritual** experiences; insights and interpretations also flow into it, e.g. in the case of J. S. Bach or Marc Chagall, to name but two.

Imagination is in demand in literature, painting and design, music-making and dancing, theatre, as well as in the mastery of many crafts, in architecture, interior architecture, fashion and design, as well as in the art of cooking. It usually shows itself when one is simultaneously focused and relaxed in the free flow of the **moment** and **love***, i.e. in a state of timelessness, **emptiness** and **fullness** at the same time, e.g. "in the flow". Aha-effects occur easily and pearls of inner wisdom reveal themselves.



Another pearl is the open heart-to-heart communication we cultivate at *Caribou Azores*. It is based on mutual respect and openness, without reservations and prejudices. When we listen to and speak with each other in this subtle manner, true and very precious inner views reveal themselves. Don't we all carry great creative treasures within us?

Such a pearl is also ours as to **sexuality**, the **art** of which is to express oneself *anew* beyond a routine, to *(re)invent*, to connect and to *recognise* even more deeply, that means to truly "see" each other – to enjoy being a sensual, sexual being and to allow the **creative**, fertilising, sexual flow of life and to exchange with the partner and connect lustfully in tender body language in a **win-win situation**.

The *quintessence*** – the 5th fundamental realm presented here – is an expression of deep *connectedness and love*, which meets every human being with unconditional, pure and true love and is beneficial (on three planes): for the personal consciousness, the collective consciousness as well as for the consciousness of unity.

Life itself is ingenious and in perfect harmony and balance, as an expression of all 5 core capacities in perfect *love, joy* and *beauty*. The question is whether we succeed in taking the journey of life and to see *love, joy* and *beauty* in everything – to feel and discover – and simply marvel and smile...

* Love is always understood as energy/elemental force, as the “essence of everything”.

** **Quintessence**: Latin *quinta essentia*, name of the “5th element”

The Spiritual Core Capacity

In my view, the *spiritual* realm is first and foremost about connection, connectedness and **love** as the sustaining energy. It is the origin of all existence, an inexhaustible source of inspiration, longing and lust, wildness and joy of life, which we have all taken with us into this life. But already in childhood we largely lose this *paradisiacal, unconscious* connectedness through social adaptation. Slipping away from this connectedness is a decisive step in addressing the process for life's unspoken, insistent invitation to reconnect with everything, around and within us, and to live in harmony and balance, but now *consciously*!

Caribou Azores also encourages/foster *spiritual* capacity through deepened **perception** around us and *within* us: What do I feel when I open myself up to what is there at the moment, with all my senses, be it a stimulating conversation (*exchange*), the soft forest floor under my feet (*haptic*), the fresh, simple food (*taste*), an intimate music (*listen*), the touching sunset (*see*) or the scent of the sea breeze (*smell*)? – As I become more aware, I feel a growing need for stillness and meditation. A primal connection and connectedness come back and through this I feel more **love**, devotion (great inner involvement) and also gratitude for each of these felt, sensual "encounters".

In a subsequent step, the perception can also expand to the invisible worlds of our dreams (with our life plan), our ancestors, and of subtle beings up to the "universal/divine". Not infrequently, surprising insights, sparkling ideas and spontaneous realizations are associated with this and our basic trust as well as childlike curiosity, joy and enthusiasm return.

These multifaceted perceptions and experiences of renewed **connection** and **reconnection** form the roots of all religions – from the Latin *religio* = *to reconnect, to reunite* with the divine "**original source**" from which everything arises.

The *spiritual* includes the joy of life and what we experience and feel in everyday life, which leads to a *perception of happiness* as well as a *sense of inner fulfilment*.

