As to the truth of the explanations to be given it is worth noting that when Charles Darwin introduced the idea of natural selection, noted scientist Thomas Huxley said ‘how extremely stupid of me not to have thought of that’. The explanations make so much sense that after reading them you similarly will be left feeling how obvious they always were. In fact you will probably feel as though you and all humanity have been brought out of a trance.

Having not read the explanation yet you may be incredulous. In a recent book titled The View from Nowhere, philosopher Thomas Nagal argues that some issues about our world (specifically the age-old problem of good and evil) are so complex that maybe our brains are just not made to get to the bottom of them. While this may be the prevailing view we might recall that before Darwin the picture he was able to explain so simply — namely the variety of life on earth — must also have looked all but inexplicable.

To assist the reader the explanation in Part 1 is presented in steps. These steps will lead to the answer to both our personal problem of wanting to know how to be happy and the wider problem of wanting to know how to end the upset on earth.

Step 1
The Need For a Profound Approach

The first step is to acknowledge that our personal problems are only a microcosm of humanity’s problems and, since they have their origins in humanity’s problems, will only be resolved when a profound solution to these greater problems is found. To illustrate this, if someone were to hit one of us, we could superficially right the wrong, obtain redress, by taking the assailant to court and having a fine imposed. That might resolve the particular situation but it doesn’t solve the real underlying problem, which is human aggression. To find the profound solution to human upset and aggression we have to look for the fundamental or original cause. We will come back to our personal problems in the end but first we have to look at the larger situation.

Step 2
The Paradox of the Human Condition

Step 2 is to introduce us to the paradox of the human condition and the upset it has caused us.

There are many avenues into the heart of the problem we humans have been living with but the most direct is the one that begins with the fundamental question of what is the meaning of life.

We have always wanted to know the answer to this question. With it we would know what to do next, would know the right and wrong decisions to make in terms of it. For example, if the meaning of life were to go down to the corner shop we would know which decisions led to getting there and which led us away from the shop — we could tell ‘right’ decisions from ‘wrong’ ones. We would have a reason for deciding on one course of action in favour of another.

It is here, almost immediately we begin thinking, that we run into a problem — in fact the problem. There was a complication associated with the question of meaning and it was such a difficult complication that its effect produced our human condition of upset.

Our problem has always been not, as we like to think, with finding the meaning of life, but with accepting it. We intuitively know the meaning of life, but it has set us at such odds with ourselves that we have refused to recognise it. This is the immensely difficult complication.
It all comes down to what we term ‘love’, which is our everyday word for the act of unconditional selflessness. This selflessness, this concern for others, for the larger whole above self, is necessary to achieve and maintain the integration or combination or coming together of parts into a larger whole, to achieve order.

Most people accept without thinking that order is more desirable than disorder; we seek it in all aspects of our lives every day. We gain satisfaction, contentment and pleasure out of bringing order to some small quarter of our existence. Only physicists have agonised over whether order is a natural way of things; whether there is order in the universe. Now even they have scientific evidence for this truth, it is embodied in the law they know of as The Second Path of The Second Law of Thermodynamics, or Negative Entropy. In non-scientific terms it could be said that the law states that we constantly combine, or integrate, smaller things to make larger things. Scientifically, this explains how atoms integrated to form molecules, which integrated to form virus-like organisms, which integrated to form single-celled organisms, which integrated to form multicellular organisms, which integrated, or grew, to form specie societies (this is the stage humans are negotiating on earth at the moment — we are developing the specie society of humanity), and which eventually will form societies of all species (which, metaphysically speaking, is the time the ‘wolf will lie down with the lamb’) and beyond that will achieve the stable arrangement, or order, of all things (where there will be ‘peace on earth and in heaven’).

This is mentioned now only so that when it is said that the meaning of life is ‘to love’ the reader will know that later (in Part 2) it will be explained what the profound first principle physical and biological meaning of ‘love’ is. At this stage the intention is only to introduce us to the complication that gave rise to our human condition of upset and for this it is only necessary to nominate love (or unconditional selflessness or integration) as the meaning of life.

The great complication is that while humans do not always act lovingly (we are often selfish for instance, which is divisive or disintegrative), this doesn’t mean that we are in conflict with the meaning of life, even though it certainly seems that way. The paradox of the human condition has been that, while the meaning of life is to love, when we have not been able to love (to be integrative) we have not been meaningless! How this could be is the question answered in this book.

We have had many highly refined (and therefore likely to be highly perceptive) views of ourselves — theological, philosophical and biological — which this book reconciles, so the following mention of ‘God’ should not be seen to indicate that this book is a disguised witness to some particular religious faith. These various views have each in their own way described the paradox we have been discussing. For instance, taking an illustration from the theological viewpoint, most religions have described this paradox metaphysically by saying that while God is love, God still ‘loves’ us when we personally are unable to love. The Christian religion, for instance, holds that God is merciful, that God loves us in spite of our so-called ‘sins’.

Now to examine the paradox a little more closely. We humans made ‘mistakes’, we ‘failed’ to be integrative, but although it may have looked like it, these mistakes did not mean we were bad. Fundamentally, despite the evidence, we are not guilty beings, we are not evil. Adults view the mistakes made by children as being a necessary part of growing up. You could say the same of humanity’s mistakes. The behaviour that resulted in us making ‘mistakes’, that saw us being divisive instead of integrative, was very necessary. We were carrying out experiments in self-management, learning, if you like, how to use the complicated tool which was our brain. It was vital for the ultimate development of order on earth that humans mastered self-management because only knowing management of the development of order of matter could possibly achieve the ultimate order, ‘peace on earth and in heaven’. However, that process of learning to master self-management involved making mistakes.

This paradox — of appearing but not actually being bad (although still having to restrain our apparent badness as much
from five million years ago to two million years ago before maturing into the variety of humans anthropologists call Homo which is us, intelligent self-managing but insecure Adolescentman.

Childman, oblivious of the necessity to master self-management, had not become insecure and, as a consequence, upset. Happy, unworried instinct-controlled Childman lived in what we ‘remember’ as paradise. It was Adolescentman, Homo, who courageously shouldered the responsibility of searching for his identity, for finding out why he made mistakes, even though it meant a journey away from paradise to do it.

The prime mover in human ‘evolution’ was not meat eating or tool use or language development, as has frequently (and evasively) been propounded, but what was happening in our mind. Anthropologists have postulated that the varieties of early man represented various divergent or branching developments. Now it can be seen that there was no branching – that one variety led to the next. There was only one major development going on, the development of the mind but we, unable to look at our psychological development, attributed all significance to everything but it.

Finding our identity, finding the secured in first principle understanding for ourselves, makes it possible for us to go back and unravel all the upset that has occurred since humans first became insecure. We have reached the end of the state of insecurity which was humanity’s adolescence and can now pass into adulthood, become Adultman where, as Martin Luther King said, we can be ‘free at last’. Our freedom (from the human condition of upset) has arrived.

1 Rod Quantock of The Book Program, a radio program produced by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), as reported in Sayings Of The Week in the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper, July 1986.