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Renewal



Renewal at Twenty!
Healthy Boundaries, Authority, and the Young Child
Woodcraft, Character, and the Free, Creative Will
The Oasis Games: A High School Service Project

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

Lucia Iglesias, East Bay Waldorf School

The Clash between Waldorf and the Mainstream Culture

Lucia Iglesias began her Waldorf schooling in 1996 just before her fifth birthday, when she entered the kindergarten of the East Bay Waldorf School in El Sobrante, California. Except for the 2002–2003 school year, which she spent at the Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor (Michigan), she was a student at the East Bay Waldorf School through 2006. Since then she has continued to pursue interests cultivated in Waldorf school, including language (she studies German, Spanish, and French), movement, performance, cooking, circus arts, and gardening. She attends Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco. Lucia's writings have been published in the high school's newspaper and literary magazine, as well as in *Teen Ink*, a monthly print magazine. She trains in ballet and aerial arts and has choreographed modern dance and aerial silk performances.

Lucia is an environmental activist and co-founded an environmental club at her high school. She was selected in 2011 as one of twelve national finalists in the Project Green Challenge. Lucia volunteers at City Slicker Farms in West Oakland, a network of urban farms that provide food and gardening help to the neighboring low-income community. She has also volunteered for pledge drives for public radio and television. Lucia is an avid reader and is currently enjoying *The Game of Thrones* series. She will graduate from Lick-Wilmerding this spring and will enter Brown University as a freshman in the fall of 2012. With her high school senior paper, an examination of nineteenth-century Norwegian fairy tales through the lens of Anthroposophy, Lucia is continuing her study of the thought of Rudolf Steiner. The following piece is based on a research paper she wrote in 2011.

Mentioning Waldorf schools can be like opening Pandora's box. Aggressive questions and comments rain down on all sides. "That's the school where they don't let kids watch TV, right?" "They don't learn to read until third grade!" "Did you hear about the Waldorf school in the East Bay that was shut down because the kids weren't vaccinated?" "They worship gnomes!"



Lucia Iglesias

Having spent my kindergarten and elementary school years at a Waldorf school, I find the disdainful tone of these comments frustrating. My experience of Waldorf Education was very positive and helped make me the person I am today.

Unfortunately, almost everything Waldorf, from the educational philosophy that governs the classroom to the ideas that influence the use of technologies, is woefully misunderstood

in the wider culture. This largely stems from the fact that the underlying aim of Waldorf Education is different from that of mainstream public schools. As one writer put it, "Steiner saw an opportunity to design a system of education that would nurture all dimensions of the human being—physical, emotional,

intellectual, moral, and spiritual."¹ In speaking of the aims of the newly created Waldorf school, Rudolf Steiner said: "Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings, who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives."²

Characteristics of Waldorf Education that surprise many are rooted in this radical view of education's aim. For example, while public schools measure success by scores on academic tests, Waldorf educators are as invested in their students' moral, social, emotional, and artistic development as in their academic achievements.

Waldorf schools don't emphasize early reading skills. Writing is taught first, and reading is slowly introduced in an imaginative and pictorial way. Students are allowed to progress at their own pace. For example, I taught myself to read in second grade because I was enthralled by the *Harry Potter* series, but some of my classmates were still hesitant readers in fourth grade.

Waldorf teachers don't give tests until the upper grades and then these are used as a means of review, rather than of classification or judgment. Philosophically, this is because "children should be helped with their work rather than tested and punished."³ The lack of testing draws dissatisfied public school students. A girl who transferred to a Waldorf school in

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The Clash between Waldorf and the Mainstream Culture

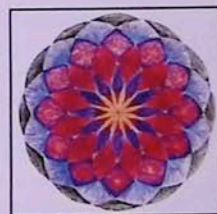
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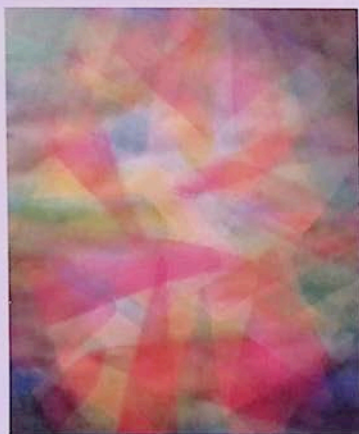
COVER: "From the Unformed to the Formed," photos by Atta Turck, woodworking teacher, Eugene Waldorf School (Oregon)

Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education is published by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. Founded in 1991, the magazine is intended primarily as a resource for Waldorf parents and teachers. It features articles about child development, parenting, children's health, the Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy, current research in education, and Waldorf Education in other parts of the world. *Renewal* is distributed throughout North America and around the world.

ninth grade was quoted in a *New York Times* article about Waldorf Education: "In public school, we were constantly cramming for tests and then I would forget the information to get ready for the next test. At Waldorf there isn't as much of an emphasis on standardized tests . . . [T]he teachers want us to understand and remember what we're learning."⁴

Another notable characteristic of Waldorf Education is the emphasis on art and handcrafts. At Waldorf school, our hands were never idle. We drew castles for our medieval history lesson, followed our teacher in watercolor painting class, carved wooden spoons, and knitted socks. M.C. Richards explains that the purpose of teaching art throughout the school day is "not to make the children into artists but . . . to exercise their creative wills, and to counteract the tendency of our time to set the imagination apart from other learning activities."⁵

As is well known, Waldorf schools typically postpone the use of computers until the upper elementary grades or high school and discourage home use of computers as well as television watching. I did not explore the Internet or use a computer for school projects until sixth grade. I went to a movie theater only once before I was twelve and only watched television a few times a year when visiting my grandmother. Waldorf schools strive to preserve a child's imagination and creative thinking abilities, and the schools believe that media technologies limit these capacities. In my experience, the media bans worked just as they were supposed to, leaving my creative thinking abilities and my capacity to entertain and amuse myself without the Internet or a television show intact. When I babysit my neighbor's children, I am often dismayed by the reluctance of my little charges to do anything but watch a video or a television program.



Veil painting done by Lucia in sixth grade

Another distinct feature of Waldorf Education is the important role of spirituality. At my Waldorf school, we had festivals to celebrate Michaelmas (the feast day of Saint Michael the Archangel), Advent, Christmas, Three Kings Day, and Easter. This might lead one to think that Waldorf schools promote Christianity. But a closer look shows that Michaelmas is celebrated

by performing a play about gnomes, meteors, and dragons; Advent is celebrated by walking in a candlelit spiral of evergreens; and the coming of spring is celebrated with Maypole dancing in honor of the May Queen. Is Waldorf Education pagan, then? No, it is neither Christian nor pagan.

Richards notes that Rudolf Steiner didn't consider the Waldorf school sectarian in any way. The school was to be open to children of all religions, races, and creeds and no particular religion was to be promoted. In the Waldorf curriculum, the life of Jesus is taught alongside stories about Moses, the Buddha, and Zarathustra—founder of Zoroastrianism.

Steiner spoke of the foundational role of Christ as a guiding spiritual being, who facilitates "the respect for materials, the reverence for nature, the striving for community, the combination of individuality and fraternity."⁶ Spirituality in a broad sense is woven into the whole curriculum. As Waldorf students, we were encouraged to respect, wonder at, and feel gratitude for the beauty and bounty of nature and for the privilege of human life.

Waldorf Education today in North America is either little known (the educational world's best-kept secret) or misunderstood ("They sacrifice chickens!"). But perhaps as the crisis in education deepens, the mainstream culture will discover Waldorf Education and, in it, a way out of the impasse. ☉

Notes

1. Ronald E. Koetzsch, PhD, "Waldorf Education: Schooling the Head, Hands and Heart," *Utne Reader Reprint*, 1991.

2. East Bay Waldorf School brochure.

3. M. C. Richards, *Toward Wholeness: Rudolf Steiner Education in America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1980), p. 28.

4. Simon Van Booy, "Transfer Students: Shifting to Private Schools," *The New York Times*, October 30, 2005.

5. Richards, p. 26.

6. "Frequently Asked Questions About the Waldorf School," accessed May 7, 2011. <http://www.thewaldorfschool.org>

Correction: The Fall/Winter 2011 issue of *Renewal* included an article entitled "The Waldorf Teacher Education Network Colloquium: A Report." Teacher educators Robyn Jones and Patrick Marooney (respectively, of the Seattle and Eugene programs) should have been listed as contributors to the piece written by Dorit Winter. Our apologies.

From the Editor: *Renewal* at Twenty Music, Video Games, and the Brain

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD



Ronald with
Amelia, his
editorial assistant

In early 1991, I received a phone call from Henry Barnes—one of the pioneers of Waldorf Education in America—asking me, on behalf of AVSNA, if I were willing to found and edit a magazine about Waldorf Education. Though by inclination, training, and experience I am a writer, rather than an editor, I agreed. The first issue of *Renewal* appeared in the spring of 1992, in a modest 7½" by 10" format and containing 32 pages.

Now twenty years, forty issues, over 500 articles, and more than 2200 pages later, *Renewal* is still serving Waldorf Education.

The staff and I are very grateful for the support of the Waldorf schools, parents, teachers, staff, and students that has helped make *Renewal* possible. To mark the twentieth anniversary of the magazine, we are reprinting a piece by Henry Barnes that appeared first in the Fall/Winter 1999 issue.

One of the interesting developments over the last twenty years is that much scientific research has been done that corroborates basic tenets of the Waldorf approach. Two recent examples are in regard to the value of music training and to the dangers of video game use.

Scientists at the Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory at Northwestern University studied the hearing capacity of people who have studied music and people who have not. They discovered that young people who study music have much better hearing ability than young nonmusicians. Musicians are much better at distinguishing high tones from low and in recognizing tonal qualities. The researchers also discovered that middle-aged musicians are more likely to retain good hearing than middle-aged nonmusicians.

A degree of hearing loss is natural with aging. Some of the tiny hair cells in the ear canal that help con-

duct the sound waves toward the brain are lost, and, in the inner ear, there is a decrease in the neurons and chemicals that support good hearing. Apparently, however, musical activity from a young age can materially affect our hearing in later life.

In the study, middle-aged musicians and nonmusicians were tested in a noisy background environment. The musicians were 40 percent better at tuning out the background noise and hearing the sentences. They were also better at remembering the sentences and hence also at following a line of conversation.

The researchers' message was: Make sure your children have musical training. If you are a musician, keep on playing. If you once played but have given it up, dust off that violin or piano.

Another recent study gives hope for the older beginner. It discovered that intense auditory training of older rats increased the levels of brain chemicals crucial for hearing and also improved their ability to recognize high-pitched sounds. The message: It is never too late to take up music.

Research at the Indiana University School of Medicine on the effect of video games on the human brain has also yielded interesting results. Two groups of young men were studied. One played violent video games ten hours during a week. The other did not play video games in that time. Both groups then had MRI scans. The first group showed significantly less activity in the prefrontal regions of the brain. Dr. Yang Wang, one of the researchers, commented: "These brain regions are important for controlling emotion and aggressive behavior."

The good news is that the effects on the brain disappeared after a week of nonuse of video games. However, researchers also have determined that the states of high arousal that games like *Modern Warfare 2* create can easily lead to video game addiction. Parents will do well to help their children find other sources of amusement. ☺

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From the Association Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts...

BY PATRICE MAYNARD, AWSNA Leader of Outreach and Development



Patrice Maynard

Spring has come early this year to "Upstate Mesopotamia" (upstate New York between the Housatonic and Hudson Rivers). This was in keeping with the strangely mild winter we had while other parts of the world froze unnaturally hard. With the early spring have come the robins and the flowers.

The dandelions have followed the forsythia and daffodils. The dandelion

is a composite flower, as the main blossom is made of many smaller (ray) flowers. A magical plant, the dandelion is a weed to some, especially those in quest of a perfect lawn, but a source of food and medicine to others, such as Native Americans. Its bitter leaves can be used in salads, and the root can be used to make a bracing, coffee-like beverage.

The dandelion is a community of tiny flowers, resplendent with warmth, color, and courage that thrives even in the cold of an early northern spring. If any of the ray flowers of the band of blossoms on the flowering head were taken away, it would be hard to see and easily lost. It would lose its color and probably wither and die.

The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America is something like the flower of the dandelion. The many schools and institutes gathered together in the Association make a breathtaking display of variety and life, color and nourishment, healing and strength—a splendid flower indeed!

The radiance of this flower is evident over a large area—much of North America—and has had a

significant impact on the debate about issues in education. Looping (a teacher staying with a class as it goes through the grades), handcrafts, arts-centered learning, a strong music program, the teacher shaking hands with the students in the morning before class, and many other standard elements of Waldorf Education programs, are now taken seriously. Even the concern about the use of computers in schools, long an idiosyncrasy of the Waldorf community, has become a topic of broader open debate, particularly since the October 23, 2011, *New York Times* article.

Together we have a powerful voice and a clear message; together we confirm our quality and insist on our integrity; together we gather resources to be shared; together we protect the meaning of the name "Waldorf" and the intentions of Rudolf Steiner; together we collect funds for projects that have an impact on the whole community of schools and institutes; together we serve children, helping them learn to impart purpose and meaning to their lives, in freedom. Without the tiny parts, the composite would not blossom.

In a Waldorf classroom, this is what the children learn—community-building, staying together, making a place for each one, working a little at a time for a larger, beautiful result. This makes a class that is like a composite flower, and a school that is that, too. We practice gathering small parts at a time to make a whole that is more beautiful than anything laid out one little piece at a time.

Yard by yard, life is hard; inch by inch, life is a cinch, the saying goes. And so it is the message of spring and the dandelion—tiny part by tiny part, gathered up, is a work of art!

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Helping Children to Develop Wonder and Respect

BY HENRY BARNES

*Henry Barnes, born in 1912, a native of New York City and a graduate of Harvard College, was the first American to be trained (in Stuttgart, in 1934) as a Waldorf teacher. For over seven decades, Henry served Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy—as teacher and administrator at the Rudolf Steiner School of New York, spokesman and leader of the Waldorf movement in North America, general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America, and as a writer and lecturer. Between ages ninety and ninety-three, Henry wrote the definitive history of Anthroposophy in America, entitled *Into the Heart's Land*. Henry died in 2008, lucid to the end.*

*In 1991 Henry Barnes decided that there should be a magazine about Waldorf Education in North America and was instrumental in the founding of *Renewal*. From the outset, Henry served on the magazine's editorial advisory board and for years was a mainstay of that group. Henry also contributed a number of important articles. To commemorate *Renewal*'s twentieth anniversary and also to mark Henry Barnes's centenary this coming August, we reprint here an article that was published first in the Fall/Winter 1999 issue of *Renewal*.*

—R.E.K.

Respect is an attitude of honoring, of seeing the value of, even being in awe of something or someone. It expresses itself in various forms, from simple politeness and civility to deep, heartfelt reverence.



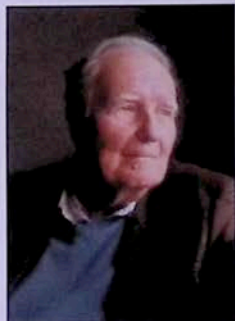
Drawing by Anne Riegel

A child helping an old person across the street and that same old person kneeling before an altar in a church are both expressing respect.

One may argue that, in our modern Western society, respect is steadily disappearing. Our material prosperity, our materialistic worldview, our obsession with egalitarianism all tend to erode our respect for the simple things of life, for nature, for other human beings, and—perhaps most insidiously and dangerously—for ourselves.

One can see this erosion among people of all ages but especially among the young. Children are trained implicitly and explicitly to take the world, its beauties and its wonders, for granted. The innate sense of respect, reverence, and wonder that people had in earlier times is hard to find today.

Yet, the current situation is also an opportunity to regain in freedom and with consciousness what we had in the past as a gift. To regain for ourselves the attitude of sincere respect and to help our children develop it is an important challenge for adults today. Respect—in its broadest and deepest sense—is



Henry Barnes
in his nineties

fundamental to all true knowledge. We can never truly know and understand something or someone unless we respect that thing or person. Furthermore, respect is necessary to self-development. In his basic work *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*, Rudolf Steiner writes:

If we do not develop within ourselves this deeply rooted feeling that there is something higher than ourselves, we shall never find the strength to evolve to something higher. . . . You can only acquire right knowledge when you have learned to esteem it.

Steiner then describes how important it is for a child or young person to have someone whom they deeply respect and admire. He cautions:

It must not be thought that this disposition leads to submission and slavery. What was once a childish veneration for persons becomes, later, a veneration for truth and knowledge.

And although he was writing one hundred years ago, Steiner then observes that

Our civilization tends more toward critical judgment and condemnation than toward devotion and selfless veneration. Our children already criticize more than they revere.

Waldorf Education in a conscious and intended way provides the child with opportunities all through the grades to develop an attitude of respect and wonder toward the world. These are an intrinsic part of the Waldorf curriculum.

The young child is "all sense organ" and learns about life and the world through the senses. The child tastes, touches, hears, sees, and smells the world, experiencing it and, through the power of imitation, becoming one with it. Imitation is the child's first and most fundamental cognitive exploration of the world into which it has recently been born. Unconscious imitation is the basis of all later knowledge. It gives us the experiential nourishment from which we build a healthy—or impoverished—soul and spirit life as an adult.

To help the child develop respect we must provide an environment of respect. The ground from which

later, more conscious respect, will grow is comprised of experiences of respect that we have in childhood. If a small child is privileged to imitate, to "drink in," an environment in which people meet, work, and live together in an atmosphere of respect, this experience will be digested and transformed into a body of attitudes and habits from which he or she will draw, more and more consciously, for the whole of life.

Each day, adults can share with small children gestures of respect. At mealtimes a moment can be

taken—through the saying of a grace—to recognize the power of earth and air and warmth and light that have ripened the grain and provided the green grass that the cow has turned into good, sweet milk. At bedtime a prayer or verse can be spoken to end the day and prepare for the night's rest. The child may not at first understand the words, but will grasp intuitively and internalize the mood of reverence and respect. These and similar moments are great gifts to the child.

For the child after age seven, the gift of imitation changes into that of imagination. Stories and pictures can arouse deep feelings in the heart and soul of the child. The little child who explored the world through physical activity, through doing, now awakes as an artistic being who can recognize beauty and be deeply moved by it.

The Waldorf curriculum in its entirety aims to instill a sense of respect in the child, but there are certain moments when there is a special opportunity. In the fourth grade, for example, the children study the animal kingdom. That block in itself reveals to the child the wonderful variety of different creatures in the world. But presenting the human being in relation to the animal kingdom can do much to engender respect and wonder at one's own identity as a human being. It can help the fourth grader discover what it means to be a human being.

In studying the cow, for example, the student can come to realize how he, as a human being, is unique, distinct from animals. He has two legs and stands upright; he can look up into the heavens; he can move his arms and hands in the air. He can imagine, make, and use tools—an axe to cut down a tree, a knife to



Saying bedtime prayers can nurture a sense of reverence and respect in the young child.

cut things small, a mill to grind grain into flour. And, unlike the cow who acts according to instincts, he is free to choose what he will do and not do.

The healthy fifth-grade child can be thought of as a "Greek," manifesting a balance between lightness and weight, inner and outer, the spiritual and the physical. The sixth-grade child, though, has become a "Roman," fully upon the Earth and ready to investigate and grasp the outer physical world. Thus in a Waldorf school the study of physics is part of the sixth-grade curriculum. Rudolf Steiner suggested that acoustics be the first topic studied. This investigation can begin with an exercise in identifying sounds. Hidden behind a screen, the teacher creates sounds in various ways—striking two pieces of wood together, ringing a silver bell, crinkling paper, blowing between the lips, and so on. The students realize that sounds are revealing, indicating both substances and activities.

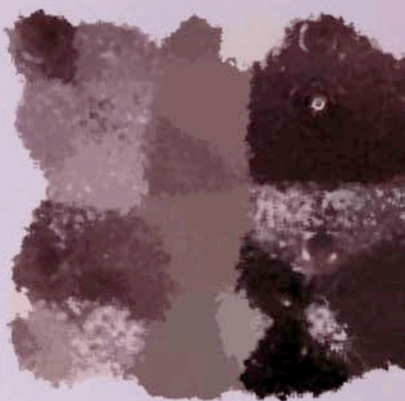
Later, teachers demonstrate the formative power of sound with the so-called Chladni plates. A brass or copper plate is covered with fine sand and clamped to a table so that one edge is free to vibrate. A violin bow is drawn across one edge of the plate, and each tone thus produced creates a different pattern in the sand. A tone played a second time will create the same pattern as before. This experiment invariably awakens in the children wonder at the hidden power of tone to create form. There is no need to preach respect and wonder here; it is inherent in the experience. Now, as in the fourth grade when the students became aware of the uniqueness of the human being, the aim is to allow respect and wonder

to arise as a feeling within the soul of the child.

In the adolescent, life speaks more directly to the awakened intelligence, and the experience of respect must become transparent to conscious thought. For the high

school student, the crucial question is: Can I trust my thinking to open the door to reality for me? The young person is above all hungry for real experiences. It is crucial that he or she be given confidence that thinking is a viable tool. Otherwise, the search for reality will be through other means—drugs, perhaps, or even violence.

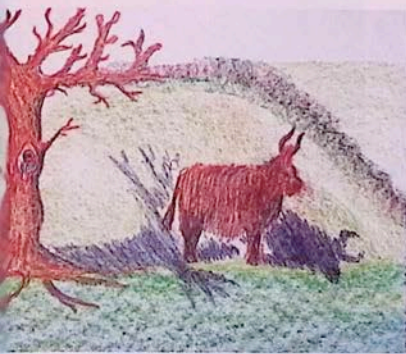
In the Chladni plate demonstration, various sounds cause a fine layer of sand on a metal plate to form beautiful, symmetrical patterns.



Teachers can help this important process by giving the students meaningful challenges, challenges that allow them to be involved, both theoretically and practically. Some years ago, for example, tenth-grade students at the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York, about to start a study block on mechanics, were asked to replace a bridge over a stream behind the school. The students became enthusiastic about this task. With the help of their teachers, they analyzed the problem, made measurements and calculations, and started to come up with designs. Working in pairs, the students designed balsa wood models, which were then tested for carrying strength. The design that best fulfilled the criteria was chosen. Then, with the help of a local contractor and working with their teachers, the students built the bridge.

Through this process, the students gained a deep respect for the things that they studied and for their own ability to think, to learn, to do, and to create. Rudolf Steiner said, "You can only gain right knowledge when you have learned to esteem it." It is crucial for the young person then to respect and esteem the things he strives to know, as well as the process through which he comes to know them.

We need to find new ways to nurture respect at every level of experience and at every step on the path leading from childhood to adulthood. This sense of respect and wonder must arise first in the human heart and then inform how we think about the world and about ourselves. Then it can move into the will and influence all our human activities. ☉



Studying an animal, such as the cow, can help children appreciate another creature but also recognize the unique and noble qualities of the human being. This drawing is by a fourth grader.

Slow, Steady, and Even-Tempered

The Phlegmatic Child

BY THOMAS POPLAWSKI, MEd

Chris Christie is the popular governor of New Jersey. Christie is affable, fiscally conservative, and known to be a hard and steady worker. Last year, his solid personality and strong presence sparked the public's interest in him as a presidential candidate for the Republican Party. But Christie is a large,

portly man. Some people wondered if he is too corpulent to be president.

Their concern was that, since he apparently cannot control his own appetite, how could he convince the American people of the need for fiscal austerity? Governor Christie's gifts and challenges can be understood with the help of the traditional theory of the four temperaments.



The aspiring phlegmatic typically exhibits a high appreciation for good things to eat.

In previous articles, we have dealt with the melancholic, choleric, and sanguine temperaments. To repeat a key point we have made before, temperament arises from the physical nature of the individual. The ancient Greeks associated the fourth temperament, the phlegmatic, with the thick, viscous body fluid they called phlegm. As is the case with each temperament's dominant bodily fluid, the phlegm creates qualities that are beloved as well as qualities that are maligned. Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus, both archetypes of the phlegmatic persuasion, emanate human warmth and jollity. But a phlegmatic person who has let the negative side of the temperament come to the fore can be perceived as lazy and self-indulgent. A clear understanding of this temperament type is helpful in appreciating and supporting the phlegmatic child or adult whom we know.

In the past, a phlegmatic person was easy to identify because of the typical rounded, often plump,

physique—quite distinct from the stocky, muscular choleric, or the slender, tall sanguine. Today, however, widespread obesity has made children (and adults) who are not by nature phlegmatics appear to be phlegmatic and even to have some of the typical phlegmatic traits. In Waldorf schools, where most families are conscious about healthy eating and exercise, obesity is not much of an issue. However, any child or adult who for some reason puts on a substantial amount of weight will develop some phlegmatic traits.

Phlegmatics strive for ease, comfort, and relaxation. They love good food, a comfortable chair by the fire, a beautiful room, and pleasant company. They are skilled at enjoying the good things of life and thus tend to be happy people. Humor and joy come easily to them. The choleric lives for action and doing, the sanguine for beauty, variety, and diversion, and the melancholic's striving is for perfection and safety. The phlegmatic is content to sit by quietly and to relish the fine pleasures the world has to offer.

Phlegmatics typically are thoughtful, reflective people, though not too inward, as can be the case with the melancholic. Phlegmatics are patient and careful and



William Howard Taft (1857–1930), twenty-seventh president of the United States, was known as much for his girth as for his typically phlegmatic ability to carry a task to completion.

will ruminate a bit before springing into action. They possess a good deal of instinctive equanimity and are emotionally stable and anchored. Rudolf Steiner observed that, of all the temperaments, the phlegmatic has the capacity to be most spiritually gifted. Within this archetype, there is a rich inner life and yet a balanced involvement with the inner and outer worlds.

According to the theory of the temperaments, the phlegmatic is associated with the element of water. This connection with "wateriness" can be seen in his roundish and relatively undefined physical build and in the slow and harmonious way he moves, although he can also be clumsy. His consciousness can be on the watery side as well—dreamy, unfocused, and dominated by an "I can work on it later" attitude that can lead to lassitude and laziness. Easygoing, good-humored, undemanding, and often jolly, the phlegmatic can make a good friend and companion. The phlegmatic's theme song might be:

*Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream,
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream ...*

As workers, phlegmatics tend to excel. They are the slow, steady, reliable tortoises to the hard-charging, impulsive choleric bulls and the facile but easily distracted sanguine hares. The phlegmatics plod on, steadily and relentlessly; they slog through the tedious and difficult assignments that would cause the other temperaments to give up or get bogged down. And, they are not difficult people. They are usually cheerful and get along well with others. They do not normally assume the leadership role, although sometimes it is given them, especially if they are very bright. Others may not find phlegmatics to be exciting, but they are dependable and solid.

The Good Life

Picture some of the currently popular celebrity chefs, people like Mario Batali and Paul Prudhomme, and you see archetypal examples of the phlegmatic, though these individuals tend to have a choleric streak as well. In general, these are people who like the finer things in life, especially food. They love to taste, smell, savor, and to indulge in the pleasures of the senses.



Winnie the Pooh, amiable, kind, a bit dreamy, and lover of a warm place by the fire, provides the phlegma in A.A. Milne's charming tales.



In Johannes Brahms (1833–1897), the musical abilities of the phlegmatic temperament reached a high level.

When a Waldorf class teacher notices that her phlegmatic students are beginning to lag, she will insert into her story a scene with the hero entering a magnificent banquet hall elaborately decorated and filled with many gustatory delights. She describes these wonders spread out on the serving table while the phlegmatic children, suddenly attentive, even entranced, lean forward in their seats, licking their lips. The old saying that a way to a man's heart is through his stomach applies most powerfully to the phlegmatic.

These days, the phlegmatic physique is out of fashion. Yet for centuries, the robust, fleshy, full, phlegmatic Rubenesque figure was most prized. And in many parts of the world, an ample figure (especially in women) is still desirable, being seen as a sign of well-being and affluence. But today in North America and Europe, the thin, waiflike melancholic and the tall, slender



Rubens's painting Venus at a Mirror portrays an ideal of feminine beauty in the early seventeenth century.

sanguine—once looked upon as scrawny and unfortunate—are the standards of beauty. Plump (let alone fat) equals unfashionable, and there is increasing concern for and even criticism of those with excess body weight.

Phlegmatic children often are teased by their peers and have other negative qualities unfairly attributed to them. An otherwise balanced and happy child who can usually slough off minor teasing can be transformed into a nervous and withdrawn child if the negativity of other children goes unchecked. Parents and teachers must be vigilant and proactive in protecting the phlegmatic child from bullying. Well-meaning adults should resist the temptation to encourage the phlegmatic child in too-forceful a way to develop healthy habits with such admonitions as “Eat less!” and “Get more exercise!” Such advice can cause the phlegmatic to develop a negative self-image and to withdraw emotionally.

It should be mentioned that the phlegmatic child can surprise us with atypical behavior. An ordinarily patient phlegmatic, if pushed

too far by bullying or by being ignored by adults, can suddenly explode in anger. Similarly, the plodding and humdrum activity level of these children can sometimes give way to a surprising explosion of enthusiasm and initiative. Rudolf Steiner referred to the phlegmatic as “a sleeping choleric.” Though the phlegmatic will soon return to his placid mood and slow, steady pace, adults should pay attention if and when such seismic outbursts occur.

A Question of Balance

A child can easily get stuck in the more negative aspects of his or her native temperament. This entrenchment can interfere with both learning and social development. Thus it is important for parents and teachers to identify a child's temperament and know how to work with it. Each temperament has a dark side into which the child can be drawn. An informed adult can help a child to manifest his or her temperament in a balanced, healthy manner and to avoid the negative aspects of the temperament. Normally, the phlegmatic is an easy child, as long as we do not have unrealistic expectations.

One danger for the phlegmatic is in becoming overweight or even obese. However, it is not wise to actively restrict how much a child may eat. Attempting to do so can damage one's relationship with the child and cause long-term emotional problems. A wholesome diet based on whole grains, fresh vegetables and fruits, beans, nuts and seeds, fish, and



Overindulgence and inactivity are dangers to which the phlegmatic may be prone.



Affectionate, generous, and lover of a good nap, Santa Claus is a card-carrying phlegmatic.

poultry is helpful, as are regular mealtimes. Rich desserts, snack foods, soft drinks, processed foods, and junk foods are best avoided. Don't give the phlegmatic child low-fat or no-fat food. Children need natural fats and oils for their healthy development. Interestingly, Rudolf Steiner suggested having the phlegmatic child eat oats for breakfast. While today oats are acknowledged as a healthful food (oats lower cholesterol levels), Steiner recommended them because of their high oil content, which provides a fieriness to awaken the child in the morning and motivate her for school.

Another tendency for the phlegmatic child is to become overly sedentary and not get enough physical exercise. Getting the child off the couch where he is reading or away from his computer can be a real challenge. Doing something active with the child, such as going for a walk or playing ball, is a good way to encourage the habit of exercise. Signing the phlegmatic child up for a sports team, dance classes, and other activities can also counter the inherent, somewhat sluggish inclinations of the phlegmatic child.

The commitment of parents and other adults and their strong will (lovingly exercised) are crucial here. But the energy and enthusiasm of other (non-phlegmatic) children can awaken an interest in physical activity and socializing in the phlegmatic child. This carrot can be more effective than the adult's unilateral stick in getting the phlegmatic child moving. Parents and teachers can work together to get other children to include the hesitant or even overly shy phlegmatic child in their interests. Adults

not of the phlegmatic temperament themselves need to practice patience with the phlegmatic child. They should not judge the amount of physical activity accomplished by a phlegmatic child and the speed with which it is accomplished by their own standards. Here the phlegmatic adult has an advantage.

As we get older, our striving to moderate our own temperament and minimize its extreme characteristics becomes a natural process. This usually involves the development of a secondary temperament. The perceptive adult can see this tendency manifesting even in the young child. Typically the introverted types (phlegmatic and melancholic) develop a more extroverted secondary temperament (choleric or sanguine), and vice versa. The phlegmatic child thus develops a sanguine or choleric secondary temperament. The more active and forceful phlegmatic has obviously taken on choleric characteristics. And the easygoing but jolly and fun-loving person borrows more traits from the sanguine side. Interestingly, research has shown that even in their later choice of spouses and partners, the temperaments strive for balance. The more extreme temperaments—the overly inward melancholic and the overly outward and active choleric—tend to choose their opposite. Hence, choleric-melancholic couples are quite common. The more balanced phlegmatic tends to pair up with another phlegmatic, and the sanguine likewise seeks one of its own.

The phlegmatic temperament, like each of the others, is neither a curse nor a blessing, but rather a bit of each. In raising a phlegmatic child, we need to be conscious of both the gifts and challenges and help the child to move toward balance. But we should “take it easy” and learn from the phlegmatic that, after all, “... life is but a dream ...” ☺



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Parenting the Young Child

Warmth, Rhythm, and Loving Authority

BY MARCY AXNESS, PhD

A young child's intellectual capacities are like a flower in the bud, gathering energy and waiting to unfold in good time. Just as one would not pry open a rosebud to hasten its development, one should not prematurely engage the young child's intellect. Hence, almost a century ago, Rudolf Steiner counseled against early academics. The latest brain research confirms that early academic learning does not strengthen the development of the child younger than seven, but rather undermines it. Early intellectual work enlists areas of the brain that are not yet meant to be activated and diverts energy from critical organ growth.

One important area of the young child's brain, however, does need the intervention of adults, especially parents and teachers, for optimal healthy development—the orbitofrontal cortex, or OFC. Located behind the right eye socket in the brain's right hemisphere, the OFC is the seat of various capacities that relate to a child's future prospects for healthy social and emotional functioning. These capabilities include commonsense thinking and the abilities to read other people's signals and to recognize their intentions, to sense the emotions of others and to have empathy with them, to imbue intellectual thought with feeling, and vice versa—to moderate emotion with rational thought—and to make sense of one's life experiences.

According to Daniel Goleman, author of *Social Intelligence*, "Such neural capacities matter immensely, not just for the richness of our interpersonal life but for the well-being of our children, for our ability to love well, and for our very health."¹ For this reason, I call the OFC our "Human Being Success Center."

During the child's first three years, the OFC neural networks develop in direct response to the nature of his or her primary attachment relationships with other human beings. The real physical and emotional presence of others, connections with them, and empathy experienced from them are nourishment for the OFC of the infant and toddler. These early social

experiences reciprocally cultivate the capacities for presence, connection, and empathy.

These findings about the importance of developing a child's healthy orbitofrontal cortex are strikingly consistent with what Steiner taught a hundred years ago about how the human brain develops. Steiner referred to the organizing forces as the "will energies." A robustly healthy will—which correlates directly with a robustly healthy OFC—is the foundation for success in every dimension of a person's life, including the ability to enjoy life, to bring something new into the world, and to infuse one's surrounding with peace.

Peace through Rhythm: Nourishing a Child's Will

A saying posted on my wall wisely declares "Children learn what they live." This is especially true for the young child, whose brain is developing and being organized without the child's conscious involvement. Child psychiatrist Bruce Perry points out that the healthy brain development of the young child is supported by consistency and predictability in the child's daily life.

When a child's life is characterized by regularity, consistency, and stability, the child's "will energies" are fostered, and the developing neu-

ral circuitry of the brain will reflect that regularity, consistency, and stability. This is the foundation for later achievement in school, happiness and success



Regular family meals preceded by a moment of gratitude help the healthy development of the child.

in life, and for peace in the home and in the broader community.

How do we as parents, in today's complicated, frantic world, create an atmosphere of regularity, consistency and stability? How best can we nurture our young child's capacities for peace, creativity, ingenuity? The answer is simple, though not always easy. We do it by supporting their life-building will energies with the basic elements of Waldorf early education: physical and emotional warmth; a wholesome, nourishing diet; an atmosphere of beauty and reverence; consistent daily rhythms; and calm, loving authority and guidance. While each of these elements is important, appropriate rhythm and authority are particularly crucial in developing what Steiner called the "will energies." They also are particularly challenging to manifest today.

Predictable daily, weekly, and even seasonal rhythms are essential to the growing child. Mealtimes, naptime, bedtime, the time for rising in the morning should all be regular and observed. Activities at home and outings can take on the predictability of ritual, which the child can count on and keep a sort of internal beat to: "Today we wash the sheets, then we go to the market, now I am bored at the bank." This weaves a sense of security into the physical substance of the child's body as the brain and internal organs are developing and growing.

The young child also needs a calm, loving authority figure, someone who is grounded and centered, and

wishing to be "good parents" who respect their children, overly focus their attention and activities on the child. They do this rather than engaging in "adult activities that the children can watch, follow, imitate, and assist in as is their natural tendency."² Parents can invite their children's healthy development by engaging daily in basic, hands-on activities, such as sweeping, digging in the garden, kneading bread dough—which the children can watch, imitate, and help with.



Involving the young child in real-life work activities supports his natural tendency to imitate and to take part.

That parents cultivate an inner, abiding confidence in their own authority is also crucial. In many families today, parents have an aversion to a child's upset of the moment and will immediately cater to every whim and desire. A child needs to know that a parent will not be manipulated by crying, whining, or protests.

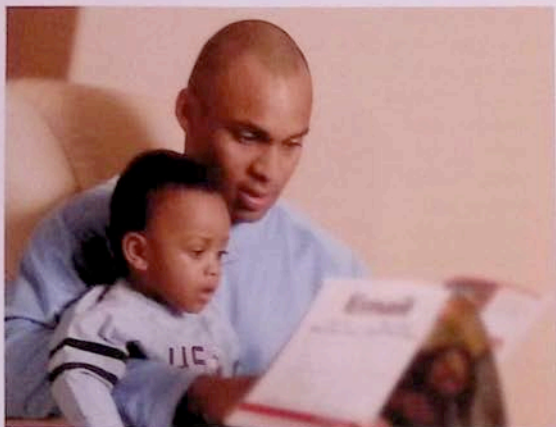
A predictable daily routine and a dependable authority figure provide a secure form that allows children to live in the "dream consciousness" that is a hallmark of the first seven years of life.

whose life is not balanced on the child as a fulcrum. In addition to providing guidance and authority, this person provides a worthy example of a human being to be emulated later in life. This solid adult presence is an essential element in the predictable, consistent world that the young child needs, and can be understood as part of the rhythmic element, providing a solid, supportive bass line in the music of the child's daily life.

Discipline issues and parent-child power struggles often arise in toddlerhood. As child psychologist Jean Liedloff explains, this is often because parents,

For an adult in a new situation—a new class, a new job, a new city—there is often anxiety about what to do, where to go, what to say. It is a relief, then, if there is an experienced, confident person on hand to provide authoritative guidance. We can relax and experience the new situation more fully. For the toddler and young child, every day is full of new situations, and they similarly yearn for a self-confident guide.

A predictable daily routine and a dependable authority figure provide a secure form that allows children to live in the dream consciousness that is a hallmark



Young children thrive in the care of adults who emanate a loving but firm authority.

of the first seven years of life. Today many factors are prematurely drawing young children out of their dreamworld, in which everything is new, beautiful, and full of wonder; in which there is less division between self and the world than adults experience. We should allow them to dream into the world.

One way to achieve this is NOT to offer the child a stream of choices. There is today an epidemic of young children being given too many choices and too much say in what takes place in the family. Toddlers are asked to decide what they will wear, what they will eat, what time they will go to bed. As with many of our parenting missteps, giving a child

There is today an epidemic of young children being given too many choices and too much say in what takes place in the family.

this opportunity for autonomy errs not in its noble intention or even in its content, but in its time frame: these choices and freedoms are not yet age-appropriate. The same is true for involving young children in democratic family policy-making. A four-year-old should not decide what today's outing will be. That should be the decision of the parents and older siblings, taking into consideration the welfare of all concerned.

When we offer endless choices to the child, or engage in extended explanations, justifications or negotiations, or express our intentions in equivocal

terms—as in “How about getting your PJs on?”—we undermine our authority and the child's respect for and confidence in us. Perhaps the most damaging four-letter word, especially when used with a question mark at the end of a parent's instruction, is the word *okay*. This is the *okay* in, “It's time to get ready for bed now, okay?” The question communicates to the child that the parent thinks it is bedtime but doesn't have confidence in that conviction and needs the child's confirmation and affirmation.

And then there's the friendly four-word discipline-disaster-in-the-making phrase, “Do you want to . . .,” as in “Do you want to get your sweater so we can go to school?” Talking to a young child in these ways enlists him as a co-decision-maker, with a level of influence and responsibility that makes him extremely anxious—though he doesn't know why. This anxiety and insecurity (“Mom doesn't really know what should happen now . . .”) reorients his biochemistry and neurophysiology toward self-protection rather than developmental growth. Also, the young child learns first and foremost through imitation, so if you negotiate and debate with him, he will soon get better at it than you!

This is a vicious cycle: the more the child perceives that you are looking to her to participate in important decisions (and to a young child even the basics seem very important), the less trust she'll have in you, the more insecure she will feel, and the more controlling (i.e., “difficult”) she will become. This can lead later on to loss of respect and a conscious turning away from the parent.

The sad thing is, children naturally want to please the adults to whom they feel connected. The child who has become rigid and demanding because of an underlying insecurity wants desperately (though unconsciously) not to act like that. She fervently wants her parent to be the calm, loving authoritative figure she can look up to, rely upon, and joyfully follow! Indeed, the word *discipline* is related to the word *disciple*, a “joyful follower.” If a parent can stand as a centered, calm, loving authority figure, the child will relax and follow with a sense of inner security and joy. Discipline need not be the issue it is for many families.

The Challenge of Holding Calm, Loving Authority

I often find in my practice that in trying to assume the role of the calm authority figure, parents encounter tremendous inner resistance and insecurity. They are being influenced (unconsciously) by their own childhood experiences and by such insidious assumptions as "I'm not worthy of being listened to" or "I have no impact upon my world." Thus they feel little confidence in their own ability to lead and guide their children. They fall back on cultural parenting conventions based on coercion, manipulation, placating, and shaming—strategies that do not support their children's healthy development.³

Meeting this challenge is an opportunity for self-development. One thing we can do is learn to audit ourselves as we interact with our children. If we sense that we are acting out of fear and anxiety, the child will experience that and react negatively. If we are acting out of confidence and firm conviction, the child will behave as we ask. For example, children seldom fuss over putting on seat belts, primarily because within the mind of the parent there is a 100 percent conviction that seat belts are nonnegotiable, and the child picks up on this conviction. If we sense fear or insecurity in ourselves, we had better not speak. Better yet, we can suppress that fear and express our will. Yes, we may still feel the fear, but the child perceives and is nourished by our

self-discipline in containing the feeling, which is an important strength that will be emulated.

Visualization is another helpful technique. I often ask a parent to envision, in great detail, herself in a typical discipline situation with her child that doesn't usually go well. Then I ask her to replay the scene, this time seeing herself acting and speaking as the calm, loving, and self-assured mother she would like to be. This kind of visualizing exercise can be transformative, helping us manifest the behavior to which we aspire.

A recent finding from the field of attachment neurobiology is that "who we are" is much more important than "what we say." Hence, our children will sense our efforts to grow and develop, and that will be a great gift to them and a help to their own healthy maturation. As Waldorf early childhood educator Nancy Poer says, "It is not our perfection but our striving that influences our children!" ☺



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This article is adapted from Marcy Axness's new book, *Parenting for Peace: Raising the Next Generation of Peacemakers*, published by Sentient Publications. She invites readers to join her online at www.ParentingForPeace.com

Notes

1. Daniel Goleman, *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships* (New York: Bantam/Dell, 2006), p. 143.
2. Jean Liedloff, "Who's in Control? The Unhappy Consequences of Being Child-Centered" in *Pathways to Family Wellness* (Philadelphia, PA: Int'l Chiropractic Pediatric Assn., 2005) <http://icpa4kids.org/Wellness-Articles/whos-in-control-the-unhappy-consequences-of-being-child-centered.html>
3. Robin Grille, *Parenting for a Peaceful World* (NSW, Australia: Longueville, 2005).



Rather than being given choices, young children want to be led and guided in the decisions of everyday life.

Helping a Young Child Learn Healthy Boundaries

BY ADAM BLANNING, MD

Teaching a young child appropriate ways of interacting and communicating with others is a challenging process, both for the parents and for the child. We are not born with an inherent moral knowledge. A young child usually chooses to behave in the way that is the most effective for getting what he needs or wants. If a child craves attention, he will do whatever most readily gets a response. He generally does not consider if the behavior is agreeable to others or even painful. He is interested in fast results, and whining, for example, is generally very effective at getting results. So one of our tasks as parents is to help our sons and daughters build a moral and social sense. This takes time and requires consistency and persistence. But it can be done. The following three-step process has proven to be an effective tool in various situations.

Step 1: Acknowledge the situation

It is important to let the child know you are seeing and hearing what is going on. This should happen at the beginning of any problematic situation and for two reasons. First, if the child thinks that you

If a child craves attention, he will do whatever most readily gets a response, without considering if the behavior is painful to others. So one of our tasks as parents is to help our children build a moral and social sense.

are not aware of him or are ignoring him, he will usually ratchet up his (bad) behavior. Second, a verbal acknowledgment opens the way for an exchange about what is appropriate behavior—for a “moral conversation.” You are doing more than just saying “Stop it!” You are showing genuine interest in what the child is experiencing and, in doing so, are making it easier for the child to respond positively to the following steps of the process.

This verbal acknowledgment need only name what you think the child is feeling. You might say,



for example:

“You are very, very angry!” or
“You are really tired. I can see that you are really tired.” or
“Are you bored?—Do you need some attention?”

The acknowledgment should be short and direct—the statement of a fact. It need not evolve into a long discussion or explanation.

At the same time, however, you as parent should be considering some questions:

“What does the child need?”
“What is the child trying to express?”
“Is there really a concrete need for something, or is the behavior just working to provoke your attention?”

One method children use for getting and holding a parent's attention is what may be called the “attention lasso.” In this strategy, the child continues to whine, tap you on the shoulder, or ask questions, regardless of your response. For the child, what is most important is grabbing and keeping your atten-

tion. Common examples include the bedtime need for the bathroom, for a drink of water, for another hug, for a light on or off, each of which arises when the bedtime ritual is over and serves to lasso you back to the bedside.

Another variant of the “attention lasso” (sometimes facilitated by parents) is the debate. When a child is told to do something and responds with a “No” or “Why?” it can lead to a long explanation and/or discussion of the reasons something should be or not be done. This may be intellectually satisfying for

the parent, but usually has little impact on the child's behavior. The goal was to get and hold your attention. That was achieved, and hence the strategy will very likely be called into service again.

Step 2: Define the boundaries

Giving the child clear behavioral boundaries is a gift. It must be done with reasonable expectations and consistency. Defining a boundary need not involve a lot of words. At this point you are merely stating a fact. Expressing a set boundary clearly and firmly works best. Examples include:

- "You may not hit me."
- "We do not bite each other."
- "Screaming will not get you what you want."
- "Bedtime is now done."

Choosing an appropriate and reasonable boundary is essential, because once you have drawn a line in the sand, you need to be consistent in enforcing it. To have the boundary wobble or change is a surefire way to undermine this method. If one day a child is given a strong boundary (like not kicking and screaming) but the next day can use a tantrum to get whatever she wants, it is very confusing to her, and the tantrum behavior is reinforced.

Expression of need and emotion by the child should of course be allowed and acknowledged, but certain limitations are universally valid:

- Physical brutality, whether directed against someone else (hitting, kicking, biting, scratching, throwing rocks or toward oneself (head-banging, biting)
- Physical destruction (breaking, throwing, smashing things)
- Bullying and other cruel and hurtful behaviors



A child's expressions of need and emotion should be acknowledged but may have to be held within healthy limits.

Expressions of anger, sadness, and fatigue are normal, but may also need to be held within healthy limits. Then the question is not the "what" of the boundary but the "how long." The offending behavior need not even be that dramatic. A parental comment such as "It is now time for our grumpiness to be over" may suffice. The child needs to realize that whatever he is doing is not a good way to get what he wants. Clear boundaries, and expectations, are a part of healthy parenting.

Step 3: Guidance on the path

The third step involves helping the child learn socially acceptable methods for getting attention or help. This gives a breath of respite to the interaction and serves to defuse the situation. You have started by acknowledging the child's need or emotion and then set a boundary. Then you return to an acknowledgment, but now with conditions. Some examples:

- "When you have stopped screaming, I will come back to see you."
- "If (that child) did something you didn't like, then come and get me and I will help"
- "If you would like my help, you just need to ask nicely."
- "I will be able to talk to you again in the morning after we have all had a good night's sleep."

This can also involve a small choice within a larger issue that is not up for discussion:

- "It's time to go now. Would you like to put on your coat or your boots first?"

This formula can seem a little contrived, but having a framework to fall back upon can be helpful when you are confronted with a challenging situation, especially if the confrontation has occurred before. Deciding on a response ahead of time and even writing it down is also a good strategy. This can prevent your being pulled into a long discussion or explanation. Here are some examples from common situations.



If a parent has established clear, firm guidelines for the bedtime ritual, the child is unlikely to try to extend it for more attention.

Aggressive behaviors: "You may not hit me. I know that you are angry, and it is fine for you to be angry, but you may not hit me. You may sit down here, and when you can be nice I will come back..."

The desperate need for attention when you are trying to accomplish something: "Do you need something? I will be happy to help you when I have finished this phone call. I can't talk to you right now, but I will help you in a few minutes."

The tantrum: "I am sorry you are so angry. You may scream, but it is still time to clean up. When you are done screaming, I will come back and we can finish cleaning up."

Bedtime: "I am sorry it is lonely in your room. I will come and tuck you into bed, but then it is time for sleeping." (You may need to repeat this several times in the course of an evening, when helping a child learn to "self-soothe" in bed).

When expectations and boundaries are clear and consistent, when the child has learned what is effective and acceptable (because you as parent have responded by giving the child a "pathway"), then many challenging behaviors can soften and change.

Your child wants your love, wants to express what he or she is feeling, and wants to know how to work in the world. These steps are a small contribution toward that moral knowledge. o



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WOW-Day: Waldorf Students Helping Waldorf Students

Waldorf One World Day is a day on which students in Waldorf schools raise money to benefit needy Waldorf schools and initiatives around the world. Since 1994, it has been an important annual event—on or close to Michaelmas—in the life of Waldorf schools in Germany and other countries in western Europe.

In 2011 all Waldorf schools, including those in North America, were invited to join the WOW-Day. On September 29, 2011, 230 schools in twenty-five countries took part. Eight schools and one teacher education institute in the United States, and three schools in Canada participated. Over \$300,000 was raised for Waldorf schools and Waldorf inspired initiatives in Peru, Brazil, Kenya, South Africa, Nepal, Vietnam, Pakistan, and Israel, and other countries.

On WOW-Day, each school devises its own way of raising money. At the Ottawa Waldorf School, for example, the eighth graders earned money by picking and sorting windfall apples at a local orchard. They also brought apples back to the school. These were made by the various classes into edible items (apple sauce, apple pie) and sold at the Michaelmas play. The students raised \$800 for a small school in Peru.

WOW-Day is an opportunity for Waldorf children to learn about Waldorf schools in other parts of the world and about the needs of those schools. It is also an opportunity for students to experience the satisfaction of working for the benefit of others less fortunate.

For information about WOW-Day 2012, write the North American WOW-Day team at na.wowday@gmail.com or call 503-819-3399. Information is also available at <http://www.Freunde-waldorf.de/en>

The Child's—and the Parents'— Nine-Year Change

BY CHRISTY CORP-MINAMIJI, DVM

The writer, a parent at the Davis Waldorf School (California), wrote this article after accompanying her son's third-grade class on a three-day, two-night farm stay at Full Belly Farm, an organic farm in Capay Valley, California.

—R.E.K.

The third-grade Waldorf curriculum is a year-long series of metaphors. Third graders learn to spin wool, transforming a chaotic net of fibers into orderly strands of yarn. Third graders learn construction, building shelters that are symbolic (and real) defenses against the storms of change. They build something for the school as well, that channels their emerging individual energies into a force for good. They learn to cook, creating a whole from disparate parts. And they garden, becoming farmers on a miniature scale, tending the land, producing something from a kernel of nothingness, nurturing change rather than resisting it. Each of these experiences makes them grow stronger, more self-confident, and more independent.

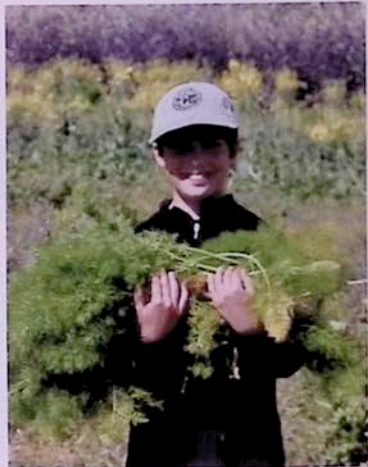
This last aspect of the third-graders' year is a killer for parents. The "nine-year change" is a key element in the Waldorf understanding of child development. This transition typically begins near the end of second grade, as a child turns eight and enters the ninth year of life. It heralds the awakening of the child as an individual. The child is emerging from the dreamy consciousness of early childhood, is experiencing himself as an individual, separate from parents, siblings, friends, and from the natural world. The world of make-believe and fantasy fades, and the cold reality of the world says, "Guess what? You are on your own." The nine-year change can be very difficult for the child, as he perceives and experiences his own isolation.

For parents, too, the pain can be intense. Few things are harder than watching one's child be hurt or frightened and knowing that we can no longer kiss it away. It is terrifying to wake up one morning and find that the sunny, wide-eyed, free spirit in the next bedroom has become moody, rebellious, and downright insolent. It's hard to tell ourselves that

the acting out is a quest for stability, that the boundaries they push are the very boundaries they are desperately seeking. Our children sense that—even if we have forgotten—those boundaries, the rules against which they chafe, are keeping them back from the abyss.

The farm trip is integral to the third grade. On the surface, the trip reinforces the lessons in gardening begun during the school year. More importantly, it serves as a rite of passage. For many of the children, the overnight trip is their first experience away from home. And they work. On the farm, the children play hard, running amok in the orchard, climbing trees, and playing games of tag. But they also work hard, harvesting produce that they eat with their meals, tending trees too small to defend themselves from choking weeds, caring for young animals, and packing the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) boxes that represent part of the livelihood of "their" farm.

Each of these tasks reinforces positive and necessary aspects of the nine-year change—independence and,



A nine-year-old experiencing the green bounty of the Earth, perhaps for the first time

if properly nurtured, responsibility. Tending the garden, cooking for the class and others in the school, spinning wool into yarn, building a snail-shaped bread oven, and planning and carrying out the shelter project—each element of the curriculum is a step toward that independence. And on the farm, the connection between discipline and independence is particularly clear.

Throughout the year, the third graders study the Old Testament, not as a religious text, but as a set of stories. And each story reinforces the same lesson: Without discipline, there is no freedom. Moses—the subject of my son's third-grade class play—led the Israelites from Egypt, but their freedom was not without the limitations (and consequences) contained in the Ten Commandments. Lot's wife lost

fence still there? How strong is the fence? How high? Is the electricity turned on? How far can I push without breaking through?

This testing was evident in the grin of a boy as his hand reached toward a forbidden knife. "Is anyone watching?" the bright eyes said. Yet, more importantly, the eyes were asking, "Is anyone going to stop me before I go too far?" The need for boundaries was apparent, too, on the face of a child talking back to an adult. Beneath the defiance invariably lay a look of pleading, a look that said, "I'm really not sure how to handle this. Someone catch me, please. Don't let me get away with this."

This is the challenge of parenting third graders, to find a balance between protecting our children and

The terrifying thing for us parents is the realization that our children will be hurt and that they need to be.

her freedom and became a block of salt by breaking the rules. In the Old Testament, freedom comes with responsibility. Boundaries exist and are challenged, but the willful ignorance or destruction of those boundaries has consequences.

Testing of boundaries can come from a desire for reassurance. At the farm, the children learned that fences work two ways. A fence keeps animals inside, confined to a specific pasture, yet the fence also keeps predators out. On the trip, it was easy to watch the children test their own "fences." Is the

allowing freedom, between hand-holding and stepping away—albeit with arms outstretched, ready to catch them when they fall. They will fall. They need to fall. They need the black eyes, sprained limbs, burnt fingers, and bruised hearts. The terrifying thing for us parents is the realization that our children will be hurt and that they need to be. The injuries and emotional hurts remind them of their legitimate boundaries and help shield them from future disaster. If a child never gets into trouble, she never learns how to get out of it.

I sometimes say in jest, but truly believe, that parents undergo a nine-year change just as children do. I think we must. It is impossible to be present with these rapidly metamorphosing beings, to watch them push their way to the surface, to fight frost and sun, to blossom and wilt, and bear fruit without undergoing a transformation ourselves. We must provide the healthy soil. But, what we sometimes forget is that composting is a combusive, smelly process. We have to let many of our old traditions lie fallow; our child may no longer want a goodbye kiss in the morning. We have to churn our notions of protection and nurturing back into the soil; our children no longer need us to hold their hands crossing the street. They need us only to remind them to stop and watch for traffic. We have to prune away the deadwood of our parenting. We cannot mend their squabbles for them anymore; we can only give



The third-grade class learning the rules and ways of life on the farm



In a field of mustard plants as high "as a third-grader's eye," the children are working on their own.

them the tools to relate to others themselves. And we have to constantly renew ourselves as the soil that will produce healthy plants, finding our own strengths and reevaluating our own independence.

I did not know the other parent-chaperones on the farm trip well. But I learned something in that spring grass, around the makeshift "kitchen" beneath the walnut trees, and in our rambles about the farm. Regardless of our backgrounds, career trajectories, marital status, or lifestyle, many of us were on the same journey. Perhaps it is age-related. Maybe adults undergo a sea change in the years surrounding the dreaded 4-0. Or perhaps it relates to the ages of our children, the glimpsed possibility that, as our children come into themselves, we will not forever be known as "so-and-so's Mommy or Daddy." Whatever the reason, there seemed to

be a common thread to our conversations, one of self-challenge and discovery, yet still tied into the underlying fears of parenting: How do I do this? Am I doing it right?

Farming relies upon an intricate web of factors: skill, knowledge, discipline, work, and luck. For every factor that the farmer can control—soil amendments, crop rotation, time of planting—there are factors that are beyond control—weather, disease, market forces. Farmers know inherently something that is often forgotten by those of us tethered to our sidewalks and municipal plumbing: Much of life is outside our control. But, the most important thing we can provide is good soil. ☉



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12). Christy writes veterinary articles for magazines, newspaper lifestyle features, and works in communications for an online veterinary community. In her spare time, when not chasing children or volunteering at the school, she writes fiction and blogs about the things that interest her—particularly her family's journey through the Waldorf curriculum—at www.corp-minamiji.typepad.com

Volunteers Visit the Lakota Waldorf School

The Lakota Waldorf School is located on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota and serves children from the Lakota Sioux tribe. From April 19 through April 21—just as this magazine is going to press—over fifty volunteers are at the school working together with the school community to carry out various improvements. Using building materials contributed by Lowe's, the workers are constructing a deck, a playhouse, an outhouse, and a classroom loft. The visiting volunteers include eighth-grade students from the Orchard Valley Waldorf School in Vermont, as well as parents, staff, alumni, alumni parents and grandparents, and board members from that school. AWSNA staff and members of the AWNSA Board of Trustees are also there, as well as staff from the Waldorf School of New Orleans, site of last year's volunteer service project. Teachers at the Denver Waldorf School have dyed silk for curtains in the new classroom. The AWSNA Board will hold its spring meeting in a tipi! Heads, hands, and hearts working together will help transform a school and provide an example of strength through collaboration. ☉



Of Queens, Warriors, and Destiny

Drama and Growth—Offstage and On—in the Waldorf Lower School

BY KIM PEAVEY

The Scene: She is hungry. I am hungry. We are both cross. She is nine years old; I am forty-one years old; I am her mother; and I am making supper. She wants help with her building project.

"It's time to make supper," I say.

"No, it isn't," she says.

"Yes, it is," I say.

This is only the beginning. It gets worse. We go back and forth, until finally she yells:

"You're not the boss of everything!"

I am gritting my teeth; I am slicing my carrots hard; I am trying to hold my tongue.

"I am the adult. I am the adult. I am the adult," I tell myself.

"I am the boss of everything! I am the boss! I am the boss!"

She shouts, flinging herself away from me, and banging up the stairs.

Ahh. Quiet. Making supper is not so bad, considering how much harder it is to make supper and

fend off a raging nine-year-old at the same time. There is a long silence from above. She must be reading. I think it amazing how these days she is able not only to separate herself from me in the heat of battle, but also to find a way to soothe herself, by herself, by reading. Both must be developmental milestones.

But she is not reading. Fifteen minutes later, she comes down the stairs in full warrior's dress: brilliant yellow and blue silks and mask. She wields shield and sword, one a rusty cookie cooling rack, the other the broken handle of a rolling pin. She has a high head, fierce burning eyes. She raps the floor with her sword, makes a speech.

"I have come for this land. You do not own this land. I have come for this land. You must make a bold speech now, or fight!" She lifts her sword. "Ohhhhhhh," I say slowly, my hands full of spinach, trying to think what the mother of a warrior does in situations such as these. She repeats her speech, louder, more forceful yet, brandishing her sword. Finally I try a tactic that has worked before with warriors, hobgoblins, and dragons in my house: I ask if the being might have seen a girl with long braids anywhere. I have an idea for her building project. "You must be out of your senses," the warrior scowls. "I have seen no such person. Now you must make a bold speech or fight. Make a bold speech or I will kill you!"



The queen-to-be at age three with an already royal uprightness



The queen at nine preparing elements of the regal attire

I wash my spinach in the sink, feel the sword tip resting lightly on my back. Time alone has cooled my temper, brought me back to my adult self, a self that, at least sometimes, is able to see a glimmer of what my child might be seeking, through the guises of hunger, anger, and play-acting.

"Alas," I sigh deeply, "Alas. I do not own this land. This country is not only my own." No, I am saying, *I am not the boss of everything*. No, I am not the boss. Yes, we do share this land, this country between and around and even within us. I am recognizing, affirming, voicing this, for her sake, for my own.

The warrior lifts her sword immediately. "Good!" she pronounces and disappears in a swirl of blue and gold. I check my rice, stir my vegetables. Presently a queen appears, orange, rose, salmon silks, a golden crown, and jewels. She bears a single white silk hydrangea; around its wired green stem is a sapphire ring—my gleaming high school class ring. She stands tall, noble.

"I am a queen," she announces royally. "I wish you to marry me. Do you agree?"

"Yes," I say wholeheartedly, washing my hands in preparation.

"We will be as companions, we will rule equally together. Do you agree?"

"Yes," I say again. Yes, *I agree, the time is coming, the time is also now*, when we stand as two separate people, companions, together, both of us

ruling, obeying, fighting, loving, hurting, helping, receiving, giving, in ever-shifting patterns, kaleidoscopes, yellow, blue, red, orange, salmon.

"We shall be married then." She bestows the ring and a kiss.

My daughter, the girl with long braids, comes back for supper, cheerful, resourceful, hungry. We are both refreshed, connected again;

we eat together, move into our bedtime routines. Only after she is asleep do I remember that a few weeks ago her third-grade class in the Waldorf school went to see the sixth-grade play, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*. I had seen it too; it was a long, rich, complex play, written by the sixth-grade teacher specifically for the class. I had asked my third grader afterwards what she thought of it.

"It was good, I guess," she answered, sounding doubtful. "There were queens, and spies. I don't know. It was confusing. I didn't really get it."

But clearly, I think now, she had gotten it, that she had taken it all in—the clashing swords, the lush, gorgeous costumes, and Eleanor of Aquitaine, pronouncing, "We will rule as equals. Do you agree? Only then will I marry you." Once again, I am amazed, at my daughter, at her ability to absorb and integrate, over time, even that which feels unclear.

At the Waldorf school each class puts on a play, beginning with the first grade. The plays are an essential, integral part of the whole curriculum. *Waldorf Education: A Family Guide* is a standard sourcebook. In it, Grace Broussard and Richard Lindley write that "... the dramatic subject mirrors the developmental stage of the class," providing the children with intellectual, social, emotional, and physical challenges."¹

In first grade, play lines are generally recited as a group, and the play, with simple props and costumes, is performed in the classroom for parents. Individual parts come later, as do increasingly elaborate costumes and props and more sophisticated dramas. In the eighth grade, there is typically a full-stage production of a Shakespeare play, usually a comedy



The real Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122?–1204), wife to two kings, mother of two kings, and a leader of the Second Crusade, was one of the remarkable personalities of her time.



Actors in the sixth-grade play, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor in red.

such as *The Tempest* or *Twelfth Night*, complete with lighting, make-up, and several performances for the community.

Yet even at that level, props, costumes, and lighting are secondary. As Monica Marshall, fifth-grade teacher in our school, observes, "What is primary is the students' inner effort of bringing characters to life through artistic speech and gesture. Drama can be a midwife of healthy development."²

we all carry elements of royalty, divinity, and heroism within us. And we also carry cruelty, fear, and failure. Class plays allow students an opportunity to express a range of feelings, both promising and difficult, and to experience a variety of life situations in a non-threatening context. Plays also are a chance to explore and live into the feelings of others.⁵ Typically, each child learns multiple roles and experiences the entire scope of the work before being assigned to one role in particular. Often the entire class will experience a particular character by reading together through that role.

The variety of dramatic roles a child may experience in the eight years of the lower school is great, from gnomes to Druids, saints to animals, from naughty village children to warriors and kings and queens. What an experience it must be for a sixth-grade girl, who is self-consciously styling herself, albeit within the limits of the school's dress code (i.e., no cartoons, media graphics, camouflage, spaghetti straps, heels . . .), to wear a floor-length scarlet gown as a queen! Or, in another role in the same play, to be a spy disguised as a troubadour—or trouterette, the female minstrel of doubtful historicity.

Meanwhile, the sixth-grade boys play out other archetypal roles, as warriors, knights, nobles, minstrels, and lovers—brandishing swords, dressing in rich fabrics, speaking of the soul life, expressing a range of emotions and interests not usually expected of or available to boys and men in our culture.

And every sixth-grade boy and girl sings in the play and joins in the formal court dance. In a safe, structured and even wholesome way, these budding teenagers can experience and experiment with movement, performance, manners, gestures of respect, and physical contact. "That structure also allows teachers occasion to guide children in their experiences of strong feelings and problematic behavior through the dilemmas of the character . . . [T]his guidance can take place without relying on intellectual attention or direct analysis."⁶

Assigning final parts for the class play is a vital piece of the class teacher's yearly work. Marshall writes: "Many times roles are chosen that allow children to explore personality traits that are foreign to them. Many leads go to children who have to call on great



Sixth graders receiving plaudits and bouquets after their performance

Experience in a play can be an important positive factor in a child's unfolding of soul. As Broussard and Lindley write:

If drama has a transforming power for adults, it has a forming power for children. . . . [C]hildren need to come into themselves for the first time, and drama is a wonderful way for them to experience the potential of their own soul.³

And further,

In some measure, each performance works to bring the child toward full awareness of who he or she is, and to give awareness and control that will eventually allow the child to take charge of his or her own destiny or life, a destiny that is as particular and unpredictable, and yet as universal, as the destinies of the heroes and heroines, the gods and goddesses of the ongoing human drama.⁴

Our children's destinies may not in reality include any of the roles that they take on in plays. However,

inner strength in developing their characters."⁷ This I can relate to my fierce and royal daughter!

The social aspect of the drama work in the Waldorf school is very important. The teacher and students typically are together for grades one through eight. Socially the students must work together as a group and, as they get older, balance that group work with their own individual dramatic growth. Considerable growth occurs within a group throughout the class play, and the students often seem to take a noticeable leap in maturity once the play is over,

Our children's destinies may not in reality include any of the roles that they take on in plays. However, we all carry elements of royalty, divinity, and heroism within us.

Marshall points out. She adds, "During the process [of the class plays], students may learn to know their classmates in new ways; drama is often a great equalizer."⁸

Every year the children come back to school and to each other in new ways, as new, changed children. The teacher must meet them in new ways, as a changing, developing, growing human being herself. The changes in a teacher over the course of a year or a summer may not be as obvious as those between first and second or sixth and seventh graders, but it must be there nonetheless. In *Teaching as a Lively Art*, a primer on the Waldorf model of education, Marjorie Spock tells us: "It is not what [the teacher] knows, but what he [or she] is that affects the child most deeply, for children instinctively seek in their teacher a model for their own development." Further, "That [the teacher] should be continually growing is the least and the most that can be required of him [or her]."⁹

This need to grow can be a daunting challenge for a teacher; it is equally daunting for a parent. We too must be constantly changing, developing, growing, not only to meet our own needs as people in ourselves and the world, but to meet our children in the new ways they require of us. Rahima Baldwin Dancy, in her lovely and eminently practical book, *You Are Your Child's First Teacher: What Parents Can Do With and For Their Children from Birth to Age Six*, works from the Waldorf approach for younger children, and makes it clear that parenting is part of our own inner growth and development.¹⁰ That inner growth and development includes our failures, limits, mistakes. When we are discouraged,

it is comforting to realize that we are in it together with our children: that we are *all* growing, changing, developing, and rather than perfect parenting, it is most important for children to witness us striving toward full human lives. And in this work, do we not find that our human efforts—the play, the painting, the song, the supper, the enlivening relationship—become a work of art?

Certainly my daughter was able to transform the stresses and difficulties of her day into artful drama, thanks both to her own resources and the incredible

gift of a Waldorf school education. And I, too, was transformed, have been transformed, it seems almost daily, by the challenges of parenting—and not without abundant frustration, rage, and grief. And also not without joy, abundance, and deep and abiding love. ☺



KIM PEAHEY writes and farms in Westmoreland, New Hampshire, where she lives with her spouse Frank Hunter, her daughter Gwen, and two teams of draft horses, all of whom help grow organic produce for a CSA garden, as well as help provide a conducive atmosphere for both writing and drama.

Notes

1. Grace Broussard and Richard Lindley, "Drama: A Tool for Learning," in Pamela Johnson Fenner and Karen L. Rivers, *Waldorf Education: A Family Guide* (Amesbury, MA: Michaelmas Press, 1995), p. 78.
2. Monica Marshall, "Class Plays Through the Grades Curriculum" (Keene, NH: Monadnock Waldorf School Accreditation Report, 2009).
3. Broussard and Lindley, p. 78.
4. Ibid., p. 77.
5. 6. 7. & 8. Marshall.
9. Marjorie Spock, *Teaching as a Lively Art* (Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1985), pp. 128-130.
10. Rahima Baldwin Dancy, *You Are Your Child's First Teacher: What Parents Can Do With and For Their Children from Birth to Age Six* (Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts, 2000), p. 23.

Drawing with the Head, Heart, and Hands

Art as the Great Mediator

BY VAN JAMES

Over the past few decades, the idea that the cerebral hemispheres of the human brain each has a distinct cognitive function has become widely known and accepted. Betty Edwards's book *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* helped popularize this view by applying the theory in a practical, observable way to the artistic activity of drawing.

The book posits that the activity of the right hemisphere is artistic, holistic, imagistic, intuitive, simultaneous, and present-future oriented, while that of the left hemisphere is logical, analytical, verbal, literal, sequential, present-past oriented. Edwards demonstrates that, with this understanding, one can utilize the appropriate brain operations for a specific task, in this case, the functions of the right brain to promote visual thinking and thus improve one's drawing skills. She provides various exercises—such as drawing from a picture that is placed upside-down—that activate the right brain, encourage a more artistic, imagistic way of seeing, and thus make drawing easier.

This binary view of the brain is a helpful starting point for understanding the artistic and learning processes. However, the activity of the right and left cerebral hemispheres must be understood within the wider context of the threefold structure of the entire brain. The three main parts are:

- the "reptilian brain" (rhombencephalon), consisting of the brainstem and cerebellum, which control involuntary actions and survival mechanisms;
- the limbic midbrain (mesencephalon), comprised of the thalamus, hypothalamus, and other brain centers that control emotion, sexuality and memory; and
- the cerebral cortex or neocortex forebrain (prosencephalon), the neomammalian brain, comprised of two hemispheres and involved with muscle function, sense perception, and thought processes.

This current understanding of the brain as tripartite correlates to the broader threefold view of the human being described by Rudolf Steiner almost a century ago. Steiner delineates:

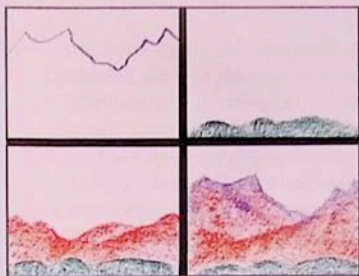
- the metabolic/limb system, comprised of the digestive organs, the arms, legs, hands, and feet—the locus of will and willed action;
- the respiratory/circulatory or rhythmic system, consisting of the heart and lungs—the locus of emotion and mood; and
- the nerve/sense system, consisting of the brain, the nervous system, and the five senses—the seat of the function of thinking.

Steiner maintained that the acquisition of knowledge and skills should involve each of these physiological systems of the human organism and the corresponding soul-spiritual functions. The entire Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy is based on that principle.

Thus, drawing, as an essential artistic skill, can and should engage head, heart, and hand—thinking, feeling, and willing. Our limbs are of course active when we draw, and this involves the deeper limbic and



A second grader's drawing for the cover of a main lesson book, based on the teacher's blackboard drawing



A teacher's demonstration of how not to draw mountains—starting with an outline of peaks—and how to draw them truthfully, building them up from below, as nature would do.

reptilian brain functions, including hand-eye coordination and engaged will impulses. In drawing, our emotions also can and should be engaged, through, for example, a deep interest in or even affection for the object we are drawing. And we can use

both cerebral hemispheres, the logical and analytical capacities of the left hemisphere and the imaginative, intuitive capacities of the right. In drawing, as in all conscious interactions with the world, our whole being should be engaged. We should draw with head, heart, and hand. It is this type of drawing that we try to help the Waldorf student develop.

Steiner also understood that these dimensions of human activity are most actively developing at different stages in the child's maturation process. The metabolic/limb/will aspect dominates up to the age of seven; the rhythmic/feeling system from seven to fourteen; and the nerve/sense/thinking system from fourteen to twenty-one.

Like many of Steiner's ideas about child development and learning, this view has been corroborated by recent scientific research. According to current neurology, children up to age three learn by imitation with the engagement of the reptilian and limbic brains. After age three, a growth spurt activates the right hemisphere of the neocortex. The right

hemisphere brings intuitive, imaginative, nonlinear thinking into action as well as an integrated functioning between the three brain regions. This integrative functioning is responsible for what Joseph Chilton Pearce calls the "magical" relationship the young child has to her world, expressed in simple play and untutored creativity.

Around eight years of age, children develop foveal focus, the ability to visually scan two-dimensional space. About the age of nine, the left hemisphere of the neocortex begins to function more actively. This area of the brain gives abilities for abstraction, objectivity, and linear thought. These two developmental steps prepare the child to learn to read and write in an organic way, to begin to grasp abstract concepts, and to be creative in new ways. With puberty, continuing maturation of the cerebral hemispheres further develops the capacity for abstract and conceptual thinking.

The Waldorf teacher ideally also has in mind the three modes of learning and knowing. In general, learning in children best involves an active doing simultaneous with an engagement of feelings, and only later involves the formulation of concepts in thinking. When teaching children, it is usually best to first engage the will in an activity that may be experienced inwardly through the feelings, and then be brought to reflection, after the fact, in order to understand it.

This approach, however, must be tailored to the stage of development



A fifth grader's botany drawing based on the teacher's blackboard drawing



A fourth grader's colored pencil drawing for a local geography block, based on the teacher's blackboard drawing



Perspective drawing is taught in seventh grade to help develop a sense of space. This drawing by a thirteen-year-old girl was constructed with ruler and T-square and then colored by hand.



In seventh grade, students copy drawings of Renaissance masters, just as adolescent apprentices did centuries ago.

of the children and the way they learn best at that age. How we teach the art of drawing will thus depend on the age of the child and its particular developmental learning needs: concrete (in-

volve me), symbolic (show me), or abstract (tell me).

Until roughly the age of seven, children learn best and primarily from example. The young child learns by doing, by imitating what is done, not by absorbing from being told information or being given an abstract concept. If an adult tells a young child, "Please, don't pick the flowers," but is himself picking flowers, the child is unlikely to obey. The child will always imitate what is being done rather than abide by an abstract command.



Rudolf Steiner suggested that the entire high school drawing curriculum could be developed out of the black and white etchings of Albrecht Dürer. This is a ninth grader's drawing of Dürer's Saint Jerome in His Study

Between seven and fourteen, children learn best if their emotional/aesthetic capacities are fully engaged. The teacher can demonstrate and evince his or her own enthusiasm and interest in the subject of the drawing and also find ways of eliciting a similar emotional engagement in the students.

Only in adolescence, after the age of thirteen or fourteen, is the student ready

for formal conceptual learning. With high school students it can be enough to simply tell the students, "Please take a mirror and do a drawing of yourself."

If carried out in a developmentally appropriate way, the teaching of drawing (and of other skills) can promote the healthy growth and development of the child and also be highly effective in cultivating those skills. The underlying view of the stages of child development, expressed by Steiner, is corroborated by current experts such as Jane Healy and Howard Gardner.

According to Christian Rittelmeyer, a psychologist and professor of educational science, the engagement of the whole child in learning has significant benefits:

Brain plasticity advocates a balanced education of head, heart, and limbs. Only through such "whole" experiences can human beings, through their organic brain rudiments, react to given challenges in a flexible, socially correct, and creative way.¹

This view of the human being and of learning has broad implications for the role of the arts in human education and human life. The arts stand between cognition and action as the great mediator. The arts are a form of knowing—doing/doing—knowing that bridge thinking and will. They imbue thinking with warmth, imagination, originality, and enthusiasm. At the same time, they strengthen, focus, discipline, and give order to the will. Therefore, even in mainstream education, research has led to arts integration programs such as "Visible Thinking" and "Artful Thinking," which recognize the artistic as knowing in action. As Howard Gardner points out: "... artistic forms of knowledge and expression are less sequential, more holistic and organic, than other forms of knowing."²

Rudolf Steiner spoke often of the special importance of the arts:

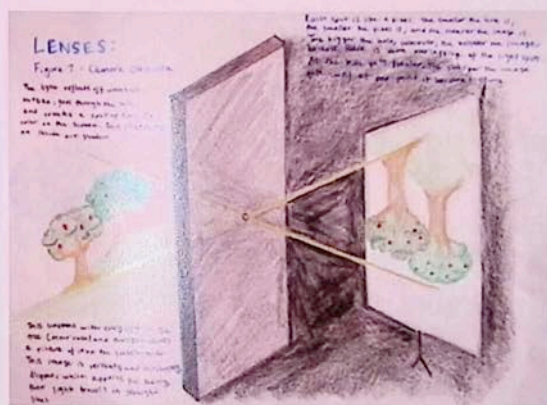
The artistic is enjoyed every time, not only the first occasion. ...



The slant line drawing technique was introduced in the ninth grade of the first Waldorf school as an appropriate shaded drawing method that avoids outlining. This crystal drawing is an eleventh-grade exercise.

Art has something in its nature which does not stir one only once but gives one fresh joy repeatedly. Hence ... what we have to do in education is intimately bound up with the artistic element.³

Teachers should love art so much that they do not want this experience to be lost to children. ... They will then see how the children grow through their experiences in art. It is art that awakens their intelligence to full life. ... [The arts] bring a happy mood into the children's seriousness and dignity into their joy. With our intellect we merely comprehend nature; it takes artistic feeling to experience it. ... [C]hildren who engage in art learn to be "creative" people ... [T]hey feel their inner nature uplifted to the ideal plane. They acquire a second level of humanity alongside the first.⁴

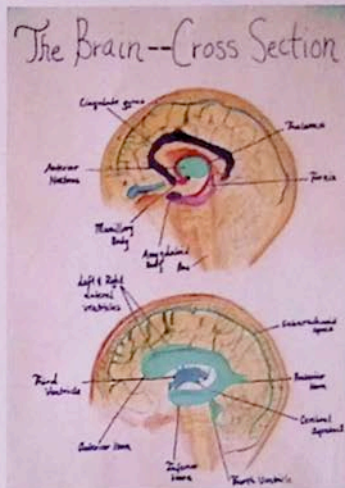


In a high school science block, such as optics, colored pencil drawing can deepen the study by incorporating a feeling/aesthetic experience.

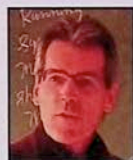
Art serves as the balance in education and a bridge to what can make us more fully human in our thoughts, in our feelings, and in our deeds. When we make art, when we create drawings, we give expression to our will impulses and urges, our feelings and emotions, our sense experiences, perceptions, imaginations, and our thoughts. Art can engage our entire human organism—our dual brain functions, tri-brain system, our threefold bodily organism, and our triad of soul capacities. Within this picture of our trifold humanity—body, soul, and spirit—it is art and the creative process that serves as the great mediator between our physical-material and our soul-spiritual activity. For this reason, Steiner suggested: "Art must become the lifeblood of the soul."⁵

Art must become a vital part of our lives, an essential part of our inner life, whatever our profession or lifestyle. And this is why, if we are not to become a robotic thinking machine on the one extreme or a willful, desire-driven animal on the other, but are to realize our full potentials, our true gifts, it will be in the sphere of creative capacities, the artist in us, that we may find our universally human attributes.

In the end, it is essential that we understand ourselves as human beings not only in terms of brain function and measurable cognitive processes but as complete, ensouled organisms in relationship to the world. After all, we are more than just brains. We are not just our head. We are hands and heart as well. ☉



In eleventh grade, students study human physiology and draw the structures of the brain in detail, to better understand its form and functions.



VAN JAMES is a teaching artist at the Honolulu Waldorf School and chairman of the Anthroposophical Society in Hawai'i. He is an art instructor at the Kula Makua Waldorf teacher training program in Honolulu and a guest teacher at Rudolf Steiner

College in California and Taruna College in New Zealand. He is the author of several books on culture and the arts, including the forthcoming *Drawing with Head, Heart and Hand: Learning the Natural Way to Draw*. www.vanjames.smugmug.com

Notes

1. Christian Rittelmeyer, "Advantages and Disadvantages of Brain Research for Education," in *Research Bulletin*, Vol. XIV, No. 1 (Wilton, NH: Research Institute of Waldorf Education, 2009), p. 27.
2. Howard Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p. 42.
3. Rudolf Steiner, *Study of Man: General Education Course* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1966), p. 70.
4. R. Steiner, Lecture delivered in Dornach, Switzerland, March 1923, GA36.
5. R. Steiner, *The Younger Generation* (Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1967), p. 120.

Woodcraft, Character, and the Free, Creative Will

Teaching Woodworking in Grades Five through Eight

BY ATTA TURCK

I teach woodworking to children in grades five through eight in a Waldorf school. However, I am teaching the students not only to use hand tools—carving knives, chisels, gouges—and to make spoons, bowls, stools, and other objects. I am helping them develop positive habits of character and to relate to the world in a new way.

In a parent meeting, I once said provocatively that I am not really teaching the children woodworking at all, that this is just a pretense. What I am really



Working with hand tools such as the rasp develops eye-hand coordination, concentration, and patience.

doing is helping them to develop positive human qualities. For example, in fifth-grade carving, the children learn patience and attention to detail. In sixth grade, working with gouges and planes, they discover the joy in repetitive movement. As Aristotle opined: "We are, in fact, the result of what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is a habit, not an event."

Over all four grades, the children are learning to breathe properly, to move with rhythm and balance, to maintain right posture, and to stand firmly on

the ground. In addition, I try to instill the valuing of beauty over expediency, staying within time frames, and completing a project on schedule.

Woodworking also develops self-discipline, self-control, an awareness of one's strengths and one's limits, the striving for beauty in all work, experience of others' struggles and successes, the value of mutual support, and the experience of the possibility for improvement that points into the future. In eighth grade, in particular, I emphasize sharing and helping others. In each class, the "project," the finished product, is secondary to the qualities I want the students to develop.

My students use only hand tools—no power tools. They often start out working on logs with what may be seen as primitive tools such as the wedge and mallet, hatchet, and drawknife. The students usually respond with enthusiasm and joy to working with them. They are reliving stages of humanity's cultural development, how our forebears worked. Many of these tools are extremely sharp. Because of the danger involved and because of what the tools allow us to do, I encourage the children to treat the tools with great respect and reverence, to care for them as things of great value. This attitude often leads to their wanting to learn to sharpen the cutting tools, a skill that in turn creates a deep relationship to the tools and their use.

My students have all been through the critical nine-year change, when they experience a sense of separation from the world and the end of the magical world of early childhood. They are about to enter, are just entering, or are fully in the process of puberty and hence are deeply involved in their inner soul life. Physical and hormonal changes are profoundly affecting their feelings, moods, and social relationships.

My job as a woodwork teacher in middle school is to awaken the children's interest in the physical

world intensely enough so that they are not totally focused on their inner life and their peer relationships. Also I want to give them another experience of their relationship to the world, one in which they can know the efficacy of their will, of their power to act and to affect the world. If things go right, the children discover over time that this is a will that they can control.

The development of and the strengthening of the conscious creative will involves the experience of being able to transform the external world through one's free and conscious intent and action. The importance of this for young people between the ages of ten and twenty-one cannot be emphasized highly enough. During this period, the physical body, the intellect, the soul forces, and the young person's relationship to the spiritual world are taking the characteristic form that will endure for a lifetime. The conscious will forces are able to bring morality and harmony into this development to create a solid basis for future activities in life.

Many of the changes that begin in the fifth-grade children take place on a subconscious level and are confusing for them. The children experience themselves as passive—sometimes suffering—onlookers to the changes going on inside their own bodies and as possessing powerful instinctive, even unconscious, impulses. In the activities of woodworking, the children, rather than acting instinctively or impulsively, can experience the conscious will and their ability to transform and create in the real, material world. These are the capabilities they will use to shape their future. Since, during this time, an idealism and a strong wish to do good in the world also is awakening in the children, the discovery of their own

transformative capacities is very important. Their moving them out of the realm of the virtual, the imagined, and of "childish dreams" requires the experience of real, creative power that can manifest in the world.

The Waldorf curriculum develops the creative will in many subjects, especially through the various arts and crafts. In woodworking, the involvement is with the material world and is very physical in nature. The experience of these personal powers through a physical relationship to the world is particularly suited to middle school children. Their feeling life, being in turmoil and transition, gives them little to hold on to, the intellectual capacities that could guide them are just starting to develop, and their relationships to the adults to whom they could turn at this time are often in a highly volatile state.

Active in these budding adolescents during this same time are an unconscious creative will that manifests in growth and development, an unfree will, and also an instinctual and impulsive will, this too unfree, but usually quite conscious, manifesting in desires. From the latter come both sexual desire and the wish to do good in the world. Woodworking taught as a craft nurtures the development of discipline, self-control, respect of others and of oneself, and a free, conscious, creative will. These capacities help the adolescent deal with both impulses, avoiding reckless sexual behavior on the one hand and the harboring of unrealistic although altruistic intentions on the other. The qualities nurtured by practicing woodwork can help in the development of sound moral judgment.



In making a practical object, such as a spoon from a piece of wood—a sixth-grade project—the student experiences the miracle of the free, creative human will.



From two blocks of wood emerge a candle holder and a mallet—two seventh-grade projects. The candle holders are made from silver maple from a Eugene downtown city tree; the mallets are made from recycled walnut.



An eighth-grade project is the making of a three- or four-legged wooden stool.

In the woodworking in grades five through eight, it is important that the teacher be able to rely on his or her authority (a person-specific moral quality) as an adult and teacher. If the children trust me, and my instructions in class are being followed more or less unquestioned, I can focus on developing the conscious will forces in the children. No distracting conversations and arguments about the "why," choices, or alternatives are necessary, and plain, satisfying, productive work can be done. Most of the middle school children are very grateful for this relationship with benign authority.

For the students, this approach makes for easy relationships during woodshop class and for straightforward goals. If the conditions are right, children cherish the time when they can live just in the physical world and can forget about their inner life. Healthy authority is still an important vehicle of learning for children in the later part of childhood. It relieves the children of the burden of responsibility and the stress of failure. They will be fine, if they just try hard to follow my instructions. If something goes wrong then, it is my fault and I have to come up with ideas to fix it. If they don't follow my instructions, the students easily understand the connection. No blame; no harm; try again. It is an easy relationship. Authority as an acceptable basis for the relationship between teacher and student is appropriate for the students at this time, in this activity.

However, I cannot say that today in most of my classes I am able to draw the children fully into a process of working just on the material level. During the last decade, I have found that it is more and more difficult to create these ideal opportunities for the children, to help them gladly let go of their internal noise, to be fully in the experience of the moment, to feel their conscious willpower, and to revel in it.

Children today come with a higher level of fear and skepticism, with less trust in the adults, and appear to be more alone than they used to be. They also come expecting to be given choices and to dream up their own tasks without being prepared for these choices or tasks. They lack the experience and the intellectual maturity to make these decisions.

Children also seem to have a more complicated relationship to the physical world. They have less experience with it, they don't start out from a point of feeling safe in it, rather from a point of wariness, and they are more reluctant to experiment with it. I find patience, tolerance for repetition, and a high threshold for frustration in fewer and fewer students. They often have as well a surprising level of cynicism. For me, this means that my effectiveness in helping the children in middle school to a balanced development has slowly decreased, as have the moments of joyous satisfaction for the children and also for me.

I am now at a point where I am starting to look at the curative aspects of woodworking. While I have occasionally worked successfully one-on-one with children suffering from ADD, ADHD, OCD, or just a high level of anxiety, I still have to master the art of



Tools of the woodworker, from top middle to right: drawknife, planes, hatchet, wedges and mallet, braces with auger and dowel cutter, and gutter adze; in center: froe and spokeshave.

meeting the needs of a class of children all over the spectrum from highly motivated and ready to work to actively defiant or cynical.

Woodworking in American Waldorf schools has often been an optional program or one that was taught by woodworking parents or class teachers on the side. There have been few opportunities to obtain a formal training as a Waldorf woodworking teacher in North America.

The capacities of will and characteristics of soul that woodworking nurtures are developed in many other parts of the Waldorf curriculum. Woodworking, however, taught as a craft—as an activity that is much more than how to make specific products—has a unique potential to enrich our students' lives for the future in ways that are sorely needed today. ☉



ATTATURCK was born in Wuppertal, Germany. With ten years of teaching woodworking in Waldorf schools, he is a relatively new Waldorf teacher. However, he feels fortunate to have come to it quite late in life. Woodworking apprentice, student and teacher of economics, world traveler, contractor, craftsman, farmer, manager, and entrepreneur were his stages before. His life experience has helped him reflect on his teaching from various angles and learn intensely and rapidly from his work with the children. The opportunity to regularly meet hundreds of master woodwork teachers from Waldorf schools in Europe at the yearly "Werkstattgespräch" has been tremendously enriching to him. He is currently teaching woodworking at the Eugene Waldorf School (Oregon) and has started a business combining the beauty of wood and LED light.

*Seek the truly practical material life,
But seek it in such a way that it does not numb
you to the spirit active within it.*

*Seek the spirit,
But do not seek it in supersensible lust,
Out of supersensible egotism,
But seek it,
Because you want to apply it selflessly in
practical life, in the material world.*

*Apply the old rule: "Spirit never is without
matter, matter never without spirit!"
in such a way, that you say:
We want to do everything material in the light
of the spirit,
And we want to seek the light of the spirit in
that way
That it will develop warmth for our practical
deeds.*

*The spirit, which is led by us into the material,
The material, which is molded by us until it
reveals itself,
Whereby it drives out the spirit from within;
The material which receives from us revealed
spirit.*

*The spirit, which we chase into the material,
They form the kind of living existence, which
can bring mankind to real progress.*

*This will be the progress, which by the worthiest
yearnings
In the deepest layers of the souls of our time
can only be longed for.*

—Rudolf Steiner, September 24, 1919
Translation by Atta Turck

Resources

Caroline von Heydebrand, "On the Real Nature of Will in the Child"
<http://www.waldorflibrary.org/pg/research/research.asp>

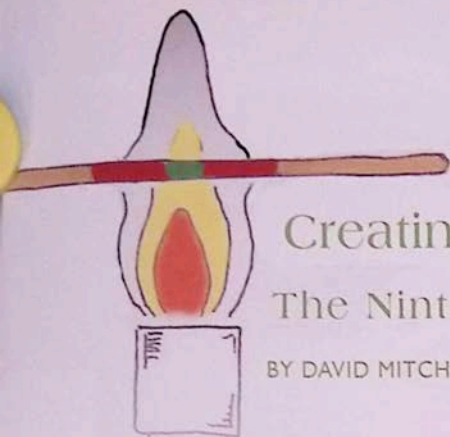
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David Mitchell, "Nature Deficit Disorder" http://www.waldorflibrary.org/Journal_Articles/RB20062.pdf

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<http://www.waldorftoday.com/2011/08/resilience-by-christof-wiechert/>

Atta Turck's original article was published at:
http://www.eugenewaldorf.org/blog/entry/teaching_woodworking_grades_five_to_eight_in_a_waldorf_school/



Creating Interest in the World

The Ninth-Grade Organic Chemistry Block

BY DAVID MITCHELL, MA

The fifteen-year-old ninth graders stand before us. When we observe them, what is it that we notice? Right away we see that they are filled with emotional energy. They don't seem to think much, but rather they do things and then watch the results. They are passionate, irascible, and apt to be carried away by their impulses; and yet they have high aspirations. At this point in their lives, they have met few humiliations, can be brazen, and are convinced that they know everything. They can carry everything too far, be it love or hatred or anything else. They are compassionate and suppose all people to be virtuous, or at least better than they really are. Riding the waves of adolescence, they can at any given moment be lonely, moody, argumentative, depressed, ecstatic, and challenging to all authority.

Adolescence is a time of tremendous physical, psychological, and mental change and development. The body is in revolution and the soul is in conflict. Rudolf Steiner refers to the onset of adolescence as "a gentle sprinkling of pain that never goes away!" What is it that is going on inside our ninth graders? Physically, their heart is doubling in weight. Their blood pressure is increasing. Their lymphoid system is shrinking, which may lead to infections in the throat area. The boys' voices are changing. They drop a full octave, while the girls' voices drop only one tone. The limbs, starting with the feet and legs, are beginning to elongate. This growth can cause pain and restlessness. The lungs are increasing in size and the breathing is changing—in the girls becoming more costal (involving the ribs more) and in the boys becoming more deeply diaphragmatic. Two dozen different hormones are being released in the process of sexual maturation. Fat is redistributed over the body—lips thicken, thighs firm up, and the hips take on adult curves. There is a rapid acceleration and deceleration of the skeletal growth, and consequently a need for lots and lots of sleep—usually saved up for Saturday and Sunday mornings!

In the adolescent brain, the alpha waves of the adult are added to the low frequency waves of the young child as the brain experiences change. The adolescent feels alone, restless, and sometimes angry. He begins to formulate questions for his teachers such as: "What really matters in life? What is the point of it all? Who am I?" Adolescence is a difficult passage-way in life and calls for much compassion from adults.

The end of the fourteenth year is that point in time when the intellect is being born and the individual begins to find enjoyment in logic. Teachers and other adults become the whetstones upon which the



Ninth graders observe how, during an oxidation/reduction experiment, the color of a copper wire changes in the different cones of the Bunsen burner flame.

teenagers sharpen this newfound ability to reason. The students must be met in their school experience with subjects and teachers who challenge them.

The curriculum of the Waldorf school attempts to meet and exercise these forces. For the ninth grader, "What?" has become the significant question,

and properly directed activities such as a phenomenological (observation-based) approach to science and the study of nature is one of the answers. Rudolf Steiner organized the Waldorf curriculum so that the chemistry studies in the ninth grade are a continuation of what was done by the class teacher in the eighth grade. This recapitulation involves experience and prepares for an intellectual grasping of the subject that is not abstract. It becomes then a living knowledge.

The fifteen-year-olds benefit from the comparison of opposites: black with white, inhalation with exhalation, heat with cold, anabolic with catabolic, and acidic with basic. A key to working with them is to have them summarize as much as possible. This summarizing helps to center and pull the student in.

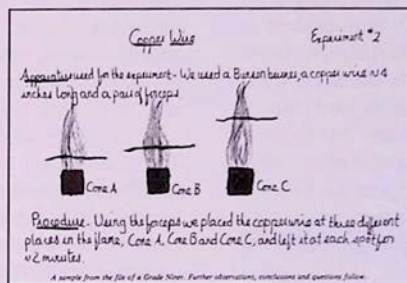
Organic chemistry is one of the ninth-grade main lesson blocks. Chemistry is the study of the inner nature of substances, and "organic" refers to what has or has had life. Everything we refer to as organic has carbon in it and has had to be living substance at some time. As said before, the ninth

graders are confronted by the tasks of maturing sexually and, more broadly, of maturing in their relationship with life on the Earth. Organic chemistry is placed at this point in their blossoming self-knowledge for specific reasons. The teacher must invigorate the awakening of the ninth graders to their surroundings in order to help

them achieve a healthy balance between inner awareness

and interest in the world. A training in "mindfulness," along with the sharpening of their powers of observation, can bring them into a comfortable experience in the present and will help to moderate their impulsive jumping into activity.

In an experiment involving sedimentation, the solid substance precipitated out of a solution collects and is visible in the bottom of the test tube.



A student diagram of the oxidation/reduction experiment

Their thinking is, however, a "willed thinking." They learn by doing. The study of science is filled with activities that, when structured properly, lead the students into discrimination in their thinking. The material covered should include the symbolic relationship of the human being and the plant world; the process of photosynthesis; the assimilation of carbon dioxide; and the carbohydrates and their two-pole direction—toward solidification on the one hand (cellulose) and toward rarefaction (alcohol) on the other.

The contents of this block should be discussed in relation to the physiological processes going on in the students' bodies. Ninth graders should experience the respiration of the plant in photosynthesis and contemplate nature's "factory" for producing carbohydrates. The technological process of making paper as well as artificial silk (rayon) can be demonstrated. Finally, vegetable and animal fats can be examined, as well as mineral oils, rubber, and petroleum. Joseph Priestley's achievements and his research concerning phlogiston in the



A student drawing depicts the sources for the major sweetening agents. Artistic activity can be an intrinsic part of a science block.

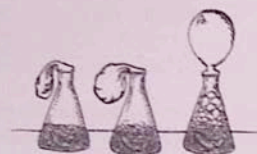
FERMENTING ALCOHOL

Lab Report - Chemistry 9

Name: _____
Experiment # _____

List all apparatus used in experiment:

1. Take an Erlenmeyer flask and place the grain or fruit you have brought from home.
2. Add 150 ml of the warm yeast mixture from the front desk.
3. Place a balloon over the mouth and place your apparatus in an area in the lab where the temperature will remain constant. Leave it for seven days, making notes of the transformation, if any.



4. Strain off the liquid into a clean Erlenmeyer flask, attach to the distillation apparatus, and distill a small amount of the liquid. Save as much of the first "fraction" as you are able.
5. Add the liquid saved from above to a watch glass and ignite it.

Observations:

What conclusions can you make?

Clear directions for conducting a laboratory experiment are essential for student success. This sheet describes how to ferment fruit or grain to produce alcohol.

18th century are studied, as well as the nature of oxygen and carbon dioxide. Jan van Helmont's observation of the plant in the 17th century and Jan Ingenhousz's discovery in the 18th century of the oxygen-carbon dioxide respiration cycle in plants can be brought to the class. Such references bring an historical perspective into the block.

In the teaching of science (and perhaps in all teaching), there are four general rules suggested

by Frits Julius, one of the great mentors of science teaching in Waldorf schools:

1. Everything we present must be in correspondence with what is happening within the child.
2. We must develop an all-embracing world outlook.
3. The students must understand and remember the material we present.
4. We must allow breathing space.

Present a phenomenon, give it a chance to breathe, then bring it back. Our block schedule reinforces this fundamental rule. We present a block of chemistry, or physics or astronomy, we let it rest, and then we return to the subject later.

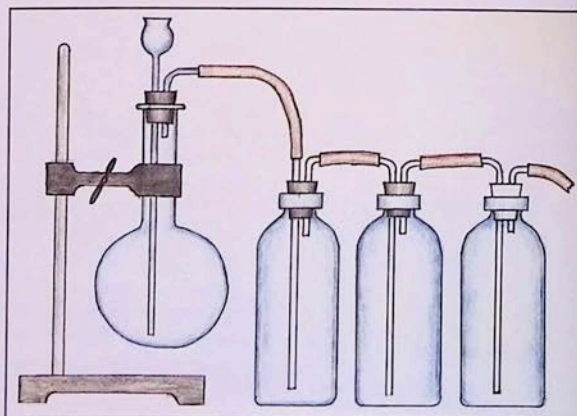
Waldorf chemistry teachers have wonderful resources in the work and indications of Rudolf Steiner, Eugen Kolisko, Karl Stockmeyer, Frits Julius, Gerhard Ott, and Manfred von Mackensen. Their writings can be referred to for specific experiments and directions in Waldorf science teaching.

In my class I keep the students actively involved in the experimental process. In addition to the

experiments I demonstrate, they are active in nineteen different experiments over the three-week main lesson block. These experiments include chromatography (the resolution of a chemical mixture into its component compounds), photosynthesis, the making of synthetic rubber, the fermentation and distillation of alcohol, the making of rayon, the creation of esters, saponification, and the chemical identification of sugars, starches, and cellulose. The starches—corn, wheat, and rice—as representatives, respectively, of the Americas, Europe, and Asia, are discussed. We do solubility tests, density tests, flame tests, and fractional distillations. We do microscopic tests, distinguishing between vegetable, animal, mineral, and synthetic fibers. All the students concoct a synthetic rubber ball on their own after our study of natural rubber.

The students are asked to write reports in their main lesson books on these experiments to include: a list of apparatus, a sketch of the set-up, the procedure, their observations, and whatever questions (at least two) that this particular experiment awoke in them in the evening as they reviewed their main lesson work.

The next day in class we review the experiment and try to formulate conclusions, which the students write down in their main lesson books. The conclusions, concepts, and questions are drawn from the experiments. The airy manifestations of the carbohydrates (alcohol and esters) can now, after a night of contemplation, be contrasted with the earthy ones (cellulose and starch).



Drawing of a laboratory apparatus for collecting a gas

One assignment I give my students is to research the biography of a modern scientist for an oral and a written report. I first contemplate each student and then assign a specific biography and give each student an overview from Isaac Asimov's book *Asimov on Chemistry* as a starting point. In the oral report I ask them to include: where the scientist lived, what his or her upbringing was like, how he or she became interested in science, an explanation of his or her most significant discovery and what it meant to the development of science, and a description of the difficulties encountered in life and how this individual overcame them. I ask them also to put in one humorous anecdote from the life of the individual they research. Scientists they have studied include Nobel, Boyle, Newton, Cavendish, Priestley, Dalton, Pasteur, Curie, and Einstein. The students are required to write up notes from one another's reports.

It is beneficial for the teacher to take the class on one or two field trips during the block. This gives the students a firsthand experience of an industrial process, created by human thinking and borrowed from the human being's observations of the activities of the plant world. We usually go to a brewery and hear a brewmaster speak on fermentation soon after we have studied the subject in class.

The ninth grader needs to experience the world as his own, and should feel that the world is an important and fine place to be. The task of the teacher is to bring the students of this age down into their physical bodies—to plant them firmly on the Earth. We must invigorate their awakening in their surrounding in order to help them find the healthy personal balance that they will need in adult life. As described above, the building up and the breaking down of the natural world is experienced through ninth-grade organic chemistry.

By describing the physiological processes, one can come to questions like alcoholism from an objective point of view at a time when the students are still open to such observations. They can see how sugar develops warmth in us while alcohol overheats us. Instead of stimulating our forces, the alcohol creates a temporary illusion of exaggerated power but in fact weakens us. When the students meet these realities through their own observations and experiments within the chemistry lab, then they learn objective lessons for life.

The fifteen-year-olds entering the ninth grade should be taught in such a way that they are led to the feel-

ing that everything in the world is important. They must learn to trust human thinking, and they should experience that thinking is capable of dealing with inner as well as outer problems. In their science courses, in particular, they should realize that it is human consciousness that awakens technology, and that a proper, moral technology can provide us with a better world in which to live. ☉



In an experiment concerning photosynthesis and pigmentation, a green chlorophyll solution is produced by the distillation of plant leaves.



DAVID MITCHELL has taught in Waldorf schools since the early 1970s. He helped found the Pine Hill Waldorf School in Wilton, New Hampshire, and was the class teacher, grades one through eight, of the pioneer class. He then joined the High Mowing School, also in Wilton, where, although his main focus was on the life sciences, he also taught geometry, Shakespeare, computer science and technology, architecture, and the crafts—his strengths being blacksmithing, copper work, and stone carving. In 1992 he was invited to Boulder to help start the high school at the Shining Mountain Waldorf School. He was awarded a grant by the Amgen Corporation in 1997 when he was selected as the top secondary teacher in Colorado. Currently David Mitchell is the chairman of AWSNA Publications and co-director of the Research Institute for Waldorf Education. He has written several books, edited many more, and helped lead the research concerning Waldorf graduates.

Resources

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- Eugen Kolisko, *Elementary Chemistry* (Bournemouth, England: Kolisko Archives, 1978).
- David Mitchell, *The Wonders of Chemistry* (Fair Oaks, California: AWSNA Publications, 2004).
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Adolescents and Service

The Sacramento Waldorf School Oasis Games

BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, WITH KELLY McNEELY-NUTTING AND MEGAN SULLIVAN

An essential idea in Waldorf Education is that service—free acts of compassion and help to those in need—is a basic human impulse. Service is one of those elements of life that make us truly human. Rudolf Steiner wrote that to really understand our nature we must have an active interest in all social life and that we must accept all the sorrow and joy in the world as our own. He also wrote that, in the future, the social conscience and sensitivity of human beings will be such that a person will not be able to fall asleep if anyone anywhere on Earth is suffering.

The experience of the deep satisfaction that acts of service engender and the cultivation of a habit of service begin early in the Waldorf school.

Children in the elementary school may raise money for victims of natural disasters (as was the case in many schools after Hurricane Katrina and other similar events), visit senior citizens, or gather Christmas gifts for underprivileged children. Since “those in need” may apply to plants, animals, and even to the Earth itself, Waldorf students, in the name of service, work on neighborhood cleanup projects, help establish bird sanctuaries, and raise money for environmental organizations.

Service is also encouraged in the Waldorf high school. This encouragement is very important, since with puberty come a growing idealism and a desire to do good in the world. Service for adolescents draws them into the larger world and helps them transcend their tendency to self-absorption. It is standard for a Waldorf high school to have a service component that asks each student to spend a certain number of hours each year doing community service. This assignment takes many forms—reading to the blind, tutoring less advantaged students, perhaps doing yard work for a senior citizen. Sometimes the high school service work takes the students out into the broader community where they can experience the real-life conditions of people who have not been as privileged—socially, economically, and educationally—as the students themselves. Such is the case with a current service project at the Sacramento Waldorf School (SWS) in Fair Oaks, California.

The story starts in April 2011, at a youth conference that was held at Rudolf Steiner College, just up the street from the Sacramento school. Cynthia Hoven, one of the adult organizers of this “Impulse Festival” and the eurythmy teacher at the college, had invited as one of the presenters a social activist and community organizer from Brazil named Edgard Gouveia. A trained architect, Gouveia has spent the last twenty years working to re-envision the way to implement positive change in the world.

During his university years, Gouveia and some of his fellow students looked into the surrounding communities and saw beauty and the potential for positive change, even in the less privileged areas. They developed an approach that aims to empower and strengthen communities. They conceived of their work as a connecting and collaboration with those

in a community, rather than “help” from outside.

Since the students’ resources were limited, they knew they would have to work within limits. They created guiding principles: the project had to be fast and free and the results had to be spectacular—or why bother! Thus the “Oasis Games”—playing to change the world—came into existence. Typically, community service involves outsiders



Edgard Gouveia, social architect

perceiving (from their own perspective and experience) the needs of a community and bringing in their resources, knowledge, and expertise. This approach does not always bring sustained change. In the Oasis Games, time is spent connecting to the community, finding out what dreams live there, and working alongside the community to bring those dreams into reality.

During the Impulse Festival—which included an Oasis Games activity in Sacramento—Gouveia made a presentation to the high school students at the nearby Waldorf school. The students and teachers were so impressed and inspired that they asked Gouveia to return to help them organize Oasis Games of their own.

During the fall term, two teachers, Megan Sullivan and Kelly McNeely-Nutting, worked to prepare the students for the planned community service project. All the high school students took a class called Social and Emotional Learning, and into that course Sullivan and McNeely-Nutting interpolated elements of the Oasis Games protocol. In the process, they developed an innovative curriculum for community service.

Meanwhile, the teachers and students began trying to find a place outside of their school where they could do an Oasis Games project. The locating of a venue came about serendipitously and awakened them to the fact that they could not work with a set plan, that working with the Oasis Games pedagogy would mean giving over to trust and faith that the



Sacramento Waldorf School twelfth graders and community children paint elements of the mural on the new fence.

unfolding would be exactly as it is supposed to be. David Young, the high school Spanish teacher at SWS, led Sullivan and McNeely-Nutting to Kacie Stratton, founder of The GreenHouse.

The GreenHouse is a community service organization operating at the River Garden Estates, a low-income housing complex in Sacramento. A collection of modest two-story buildings in one of the less affluent areas of Sacramento, River Garden Estates is multiethnic, including Caucasian, African-American, Latino, Asian, and Eastern European households. Over 500 children live in the complex, and The GreenHouse serves these children by providing afterschool activities, tutoring, and other programs.

Once the project was identified, the collaborative work between SWS and The GreenHouse began. The Oasis Games are designed to be a five-day intensive involving adult volunteers. A group of people come into the community, play the games with the local people, and then they leave. Sullivan and McNeely-Nutting soon realized that, because they were working with junior high and high school students and because they were doing a project in their own city, a primary goal would be to develop an ongoing relationship with The GreenHouse. Thus the standard procedure of the Oasis Games had to be adapted to these circumstances.

At SWS the students went through two months of training that would allow them to approach the community in a respectful, open way, without judgment. Students and teachers had to shift from the traditional top-down community service model to one based on working with the experts living in the



Community members and visiting volunteers work together to make a walking path usable and safe.



GreenHouse youth leader Brayan Noriega celebrates his mural design on the last day of the Oasis Games.

community. This reorientation proved very important in the later on-site work, helping the volunteers to interact very positively with the local residents.

The GreenHouse already had a youth leaders-in-training group active in their community. Sullivan and

McNeely-Nutting began working with an SWS youth leadership team, and the two groups met once a week to connect, dream, and plan. The outcome of this process was the identification of three possible projects for the weeklong Oasis Games. The River Garden Estates community dreamed of a path and a vacant lot made safe, a community garden resurrected, and an experience of play and craftwork for its children.

The actual work took place during the Presidents' Week vacation of February 20–24, 2012. About 100 students and about 50 adults (teachers and parents) from SWS took part, as well as a small contingent of students and adults from the Peninsula Waldorf School in Los Altos, California. Almost 150 youth and adult volunteers from The GreenHouse also participated. For five days, this heterogeneous (in terms of ethnicity, age, education, and affluence) gathering of human beings worked together, did crafts together, relaxed and ate together, and got to know one another.

By the end of the week, in the large community garden, fences and benches had been built from recycled materials, fresh plots had been cleared for families to cultivate, the soil was tilled, pathways laid out, and an irrigation system put in. All the materials were donated just before the start of the project.

Meanwhile, three commercial-size dumpsters were filled with trash from the vacant lot, a 180-foot-long wooden fence was torn down and rebuilt, and a

mural was designed and painted on the fence. In addition, a 200-foot-long walking path was leveled and covered with crushed granite, providing safe access for mothers with strollers and the elderly to reach local stores.

While the teenagers and adults were busy working, the children of the neighborhood did crafts and other activities with some of the Waldorf students. They learned yarn crafts, made wet-felted decorations, painted prayer flags, and made smoothies with a hand-cranked blender.

In the parlance of the Oasis Games, the end results were "spectacular." In this case, spectacular does not mean perfect, but that all involved gave their best effort to the project.

According to the standard Oasis Games practice, once a group of volunteers has helped a community realize its objectives, they leave and do not return. The hope is that the local community will maintain and carry forward what has been created. In this case, however, the teachers and students from SWS always had the intention that there would be an ongoing relationship. In fact, they are going out again this spring break to finish a mural and work/play in the garden.

The SWS Oasis Games is an example of a meaningful service project that benefited everyone concerned. It provided the students with an experience of life outside the sometimes narrow confines of "Waldorfia," an appreciation of our common humanity, and an understanding of the importance of service in our deeply interconnected world.

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A Sacramento Waldorf School twelfth grader paints the face of a child from the community.

Edgard Gouveia is currently involved in a worldwide Internet initiative called "Play the Game," which has the ambitious goal of having two billion people involved in community service projects. Visit www.playthecall.com

Book Review

The Multifaceted Life of Emil Molt (Father of the Waldorf School)

BY SOPHIA CHRISTINE MURPHY

REVIEWED BY RONALD E. KOETZSCH, PhD



Emil Molt

Emil Molt (1876–1936) is well-known in Waldorf circles as the person, who, in the spring of 1919, asked Rudolf Steiner if there were an educational approach that would result in human beings who could live in peace. When Steiner replied in the affirmative, Molt asked if Steiner

were willing to help create such a school. Steiner again said yes, and five months later, the first Waldorf school was founded in Stuttgart.

But Molt was much more than “the father of the Waldorf school.” He was a successful businessman and entrepreneur, a social and political visionary and spiritual seeker, a man who was willing to sacrifice much for his ideals, one who accomplished much, but also one who experienced great setbacks in his life. In this biography, the author, Molt’s granddaughter, with access to Molt’s personal diaries (recently discovered in her mother’s attic), gives a detailed and engaging account of Emil Molt’s life.

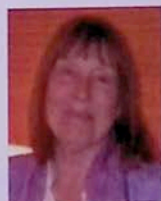
Orphaned at age thirteen, Molt became involved in business as a young man. In his early twenties, he went to Greece for a year, working for a German export firm. He returned to Stuttgart to take over management of the Waldorf–Astoria cigarette factory. The firm thrived and Molt became wealthy. Molt was a kind and generous employer and for several years provided evening classes free to his workers.

Molt first met Rudolf Steiner in 1904, became a member of the German Theosophical Society in 1906 and, later, of the Anthroposophical Society. He was devoted to Steiner’s vision of an economic and social order based on a spiritual understanding of

the human being. After World War I, Molt and a group of Stuttgart-based anthroposophists formed an association of business enterprises to be run according to Steiner’s ideas of the Threefold Social Order. Molt, by then the owner of the Waldorf–Astoria firm, donated his company. The association, called “Die Kommende Tag” (The Coming Day), was poorly managed, and Molt’s company was soon sold to a group of banks. Molt was kept on as manager. A few years later, the banks sold the company to another cigarette manufacturer, who liquidated the firm. Molt learned about this and about his loss of a job by reading of it in the newspaper.

Molt’s role as the founder and supporter of the Waldorf school also was not without difficulty and pain. A year after the founding of the school, the teachers petitioned Steiner to make the school independent of Molt and to remove him—because he was not a teacher—from the college of teachers, which ran the school. Even after that, Molt continued to pay the tuition of the many children of his workers who attended the school. In his last years, Molt witnessed the slow strangulation of the Waldorf school by the National Socialist government, which culminated in the school’s closing from 1937 until after the war.

This book is the story of an extraordinary man and his wife and family. But it is also a vivid evocation of what life was like in Middle Europe in the tumultuous first decades of the twentieth century. In particular, it gives a new and detailed picture of the early history of the Waldorf movement, of Rudolf Steiner, of other anthroposophical leaders and initiatives of the time, and of how challenging it was to put spiritual ideals into action in the world. ☺

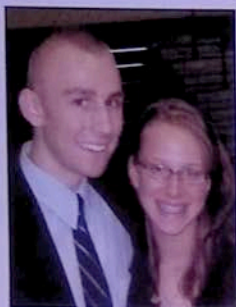


Sophia Christine
Murphy

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Miles Levin

Portrait of a Remarkable Alumnus



Miles Levin with his sister, Nina

Miles Levin was born in Omaha, Nebraska, in August 1988. When he was seven, his family moved to the Detroit area, and Miles entered the first grade at the Oakland Steiner School in Rochester Hills. Miles remained at the school until his graduation from eighth grade in 2002. He then enrolled in Cranbrook Kingswood, a nearby independent school. By his own account, Miles was a typical,

cavalier high school student with no particular philosophical inclination.

At Cranbrook, Miles was thankful for the international students and for being able, as a Jewish person, to get to know Muslim boys his own age from Saudi Arabia. He later wrote in a blog:

It is easy to depersonalize those who are different from ourselves, but there is a profound beauty and simplicity in the notion that we are, no matter how different, all human beings.

In June of 2005, Miles experienced sharp pain in his lower abdomen. Soon thereafter he was diagnosed with a rare pediatric cancer—alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma—which occurs in the soft tissue of muscles and organs. The cancer was diagnosed as Stage 3, chemotherapy was prescribed, and Miles underwent surgery to have a chemotherapy port implanted in his chest. It was the first of many painful and disheartening surgeries and procedures that he was to experience.

The treatments and procedures were not particularly effective, though there was one brief period when he seemed to be cancer-free. In a blog of April 2006, Miles shared that he realized that his chances of survival were small. Throughout the course of his illness, Miles chronicled the process, hoping that he could make people aware of the possibility of dying with dignity, even joy.

The blog attracted thousands of readers from all over the world. People were inspired by Miles's humility, courage, and sensitivity. He was happy about this. He wrote "Dying is not what scares me; it's dying having had no impact." Miles became a bit of a celebrity. He met the world-champion Boston Red Sox and appeared on television on CNN. When he was too ill to blog, his father, Jon, and mother, Nancy, did it for him.

Miles Levin died at home on August 19, 2007, shortly before his nineteenth birthday. His twenty-six month struggle with cancer had matured, refined, and deepened him as a human being. Miles, his family, friends, and countless others had been transformed by how he had chosen to confront the ultimate transformation, that of death.

After Miles's passing, Jon Levin gathered Miles's many blogs and wrote an accompanying commentary about the experiences of Miles and of the family. The material was published in 2011 in book form and entitled: *Keep Fighting, Keep Struggling: The Miles Levin Story*. Well-known journalist Bob Woodruff, who had become Miles's friend and mentor, wrote an introduction.

On page one of the book, Jon Levin writes:

[When we returned to Detroit] we intentionally located our house less than a mile from the Oakland Steiner School, a private primary school based on the Waldorf educational model. What Miles learned of classical mythology and heroism at this school would later be a source of courage for him. The overarching goal of a Waldorf education is to provide its students with the basis on which to develop into free, moral, and integrated individuals—and to help every child fulfill his or her unique destiny. I feel this last to be an important part of what Miles received from his Waldorf education.

Miles Levin is a Waldorf graduate of whom we can be wholeheartedly and justly proud. ☉

—R.E.K.

Keep Fighting, Keep Struggling is available for purchase at whywaldorfworks.org