

Harmony in the lives of Children

*Nina Meyerhof**

The 21st century holds the greatest possibilities for an integrated peaceful and prosperous global community. Connected by telecommunications and a growing spirituality, humankind has a chance to actualize an evolutionary state of being. At the same time, the future has never before been more challenged by worldwide terrorism, poverty, rapid climate change, inadequate education and health care and geopolitical unrest. The kind of world that the next generation will experience will depend upon the collective vision and intention of world leaders. As long as the global culture is grounded in fear, greed and scarcity, we will continue to use our human and financial resources for war and destruction. As we shift towards love, compassion in education, we will deploy resources for the common good, lifting up all people to a life of hope and security.

Today, science and spirituality are coming to the same conclusion that all people are intrinsically similar; the human genome project has proven that we are genetically 99.9% alike with only 1 tenth of one percent that makes us different. Until we realize that "I am you and you are me", only then will right action and thought be supported by the universal laws of nature. Until we can concentrate on what makes us the same instead of what makes us different, only then can we deal with the challenges ahead. It is imperative that we spend our time and resources on young people, supporting leadership and educational experiences that

promote respectful communities, common ethics, sustainable practices, peace, and economic opportunities.

It is very relevant to begin to reflect on this word Harmony. It is meant to create a sense of bringing together in easy oneness, a blending and piecing together of parts so that we are no longer in separatist thinking. Like a symphony of sounds. If we as a common human family can begin to understand the interrelationship of parts to the whole then we will find the harmony needed for building a unitive sensing of how humanity might live together as a human family. It appears it is our ego driven isolationist sense that creates a world of people who feel they must protect and build their own personal fortresses rather than experiencing a complementary relationship to one another. Presently we behave in a manner to feel individually safe and secure as a basis a sense of fearfulness of loss for self rather than to give freely with an open heart. The movement into harmony is the transformation from fear to love so as we step into this basic holographic relationship then the transformation into harmony begins and nature's flow emerges.

So how do we educate for this understanding of moving from the personal to the more spacious understanding of the whole? How do we as educators model what we ourselves are not capable of to date? Do we realize that each generation is more fully conscious and thus more capable to move into an abstract understanding of living from hunter gatherer

* Founder and President, Children of the Earth.

E-mail Id: nina@coeworld.org

to transcendent being? It is our obligation to give the next generation an opportunity to evolve to the next level of consciousness. Each successive generation carries the greater potential to learn to live as a family of humankind. Many of the children carry the genetics for unraveling this mystery. As adults we must create safe spaces for this exploration and understanding and fostering growth of the potential for universal harmony while living one's full potential.

Parents of the next generation need to realize their children are born to be independent individuals ushered through life by themselves gently and with structure but not to live as a cookie cutter molding of predetermined parental expectations and outlook for professions and cultural life styles. Parents can either push to have their child be of their personal perspectives of life or they can begin to realize that children are also people born to have their own life experiences. Children are individuals not endowed to only imitate what has come before them thus to follow their parent's footsteps but to evolve forwards like carrying a torch of evolution. The individual carries the genetics for emerging the next seeding of conscious evolution. The world is altering moment to moment. The world, in spite of our determination to create separateness through borders and religions and cultures, there is a human push to truly becoming borderless so cultures are merging, religions are unifying and seeking out interfaith commonalities and ethnicities are becoming more intermarried. The universal human being is emerging and so is the call for harmonizing giving up wars and violence that fear and separation creates to becoming a synthetic approach of observing humanity. The role of the parent that becomes apparent

is to empower and to understand and to create positive environments for personal growth with secure surroundings. The fewer constraints to imitate what has become historically before for a child, the more possibility to build a harmonious environment not cluttered with concerns but rather introspective for emotional-social growth and the furtherance of a culture of peace through harmony.

From a hunter gathers role to agriculture to the industrial era to technological knowhow, children are now being born into a phase where there is the possibility to tap into the global brain and become part of the totality of life. The platform of new thinking today is that consciousness is always available and changing. In the newer understanding of science we learn an individual's genetic endowment is always in a state of flux. Thus we learn that children can be influenced to alter their perceptions and their genetics as well as reveal new configurations of thinking using bilateral brain functioning. Children can be welcomed into our world as the hope of the future and the possibility of creating a sense of world unity through personal daily functions.

Harmony lies in the freedom of each member of the family as having a particular identity that integrates fluidly with others. It is a new holistic approach rather than linear as it is piecing together as whole unto itself yet open faceted endlessly. What does this mean? This means that each person born into a family has the right to their own perceptions and experiences. In the historical past this was mainly built on the conceptual model of what you sow, you reap thus always to remain focused on your personal concerns and one's own issues and now we have the opportunity to evolve in one's own consciousness beyond

the self into the collective whole for future lives. Now we are slowly reaching where the purpose of life is not only based on relationships and inner growth but also the potential to bring forth new means of living on our planet. A child enters into a family constellation and thus parents must stay attune to the understanding that they are there to shepherd the child's life purpose rather than molding a child into their presupposed idea of what is needed in the present day culture. Culture is formed by succeeding generations but this next generation has an immeasurable task due to climate change issues and global awareness. Our technological processes that combine people from around the world is opening up the door to global harmony.

Harmony is a deep sense of being in step with one's self....knowing one's inner drives and purpose. Each of us also wishes to be in a natural harmonious flow with others in our immediate vicinity seeking the inner connection that brings us together. We know inner peace is more than the absence of war. We know it is a state of being as well. We learn the words and seek the experience of inner peace for the road to world peace. Peace inner to outer is right relationship to the self and other

Peace is a rare state of non-violence and the mantra is total harmlessness. This is a truism reflected through thought, word and deed. Violence is a projection that resides in the mind resulting from our many needs for self protection.. In this pursuit of peace we recognize a state of mindful nonviolence. Violence, living in the mind, is every mental separation and slicing of life into segments for our own personal ego gratification. It is the heart that knows no boundaries nor ego gratification thus knows no violence and

remains open to love. An open heart gives opportunity for harmony to exist.

Our goal is to experience unitive synergy: uniting as one and furthering the understanding of the collaborative group. Oneness of the authentic self within the self, co-aligned with oneness within all other selves. The heart is where this potential resides. PEACE is possible.

We know we are interdependent and interconnected but are looking for ways to know how to live this and what does this mean in our daily lives. We seek to lead with our hearts...and live love.

If we are to change our own behaviors then our education must change. Our systems need to reflect this deepest understanding of what it means to be human and to live at a time when the true essence of a global society is truly the interconnectedness of all intentions and deeds. There has been an on-going evolution for the need for moral education and the rising potential of the empowered voice of individuals. To take this deeper is to know that the next relevant educational model is to educate for tapping into higher consciousness and translating the experience into societal actions for external global harmony. We must lead with our hearts, use our minds to further our understandings of how our universe works, and then to learn how to behave as one family of humankind.

Children of the Earth are founded for this purpose of spreading peace. We serve young people to become spiritually conscious leaders, through personal educational processes for the purpose of social transformation for the advancement of a peaceful and sustainable earth. We are

determined to create an arena that serves to attract those who are inspired to serve the world through the discovery of their inner authentic soul self 's passion for living a life of meaning. They respond in actualizing their personal intention, becoming inspired to altruism, and weaving a web bridging all personal, cultural, national and religious divides. Children of the Earth's goal are to contribute to the facilitation of a conscious movement towards inner peace, unitive thinking and evolving positive social change.

We offer workshops based on our training model: Reflect-Connect-Act building this synergistic momentum. We are building an "inner revolution for our social evolution".

We recognize that the youth are not only the inheritors of our past but the pilgrims pioneering our future. Education is a calling...a vocation of passion for individuals who care about our next generation and our collective future. Educators today are so often bogged down by the subjects they are teaching that they often forget they are builders of this most important future. The young people are not only inheritors of our past but are also our initiators into the next phase of evolutionary consciousness. They are the architects for the coming phases that include social, cultural and global development. They have the potential to no longer imitate what has come before them but rather imagining the scaffolding for structures that lead us into a better future. They are offered an opportunity to clear their minds of negativity and replace this with by leading from the heart.

As educators, we need to invite children and youth to envision a world they want. They must engage in a process of how to

fully realize their inner potential and share this with the world. Furthermore they need to explore and imagine how could we co-exist as one humanity and what does it truly mean that humanity is interconnected and interdependent. If we are to educate our children for these deeper understandings of life, then we must prepare them for the understanding that all consciousness is always evolving and is more and more accessible.

We must further the recognition that each and every one of us has a divine essence hidden beneath the many layers of cultural, ethnic and religious differences; that we are basically the same and it is our minds that create separation. From duality into unity, consciousness allows us to build a world that works for all.

We are also learning that one's genetic makeup can be always changing depending on one's intent. Increase our positive intention and change our genetic makeup. This gives our future a better mapping of possibilities. Education can serve building genetically new pathways.

Education comes from the word educate...which means to draw forth or lead out. This drawing forth implies that there is someone or some understandings that are residing within us. This drawing forth is focused on a request to explore through intuitive knowing what emanates from the eternal self, the Divine Spark, that is an historic essence that continues in time and space. This is a means of reflecting our true individual identity. Educating for seeking inner truths of who each student is individually and how one is connected as one humanity, is a process of self-reflection and inner valuing of an

Authentic Self. This essence, an Authentic Self, the Divine Spark, that which each and every one of us contains has a personal expression and something of value to offer the world. This spark is where interconnectedness and interdependence unite with the source of all. This spark carries within it a sense of selfness that can only be described by the individual and known through self-exploration. This essence has no personal negative or positive self-esteem but rather is fully evolved and has purpose. It is through the recognition of that life purpose that the student can fully reach his or her potential and be fully empowered to make a difference in the world. As one recognizes this true self, one begins to explore the relationship of self to others and the realization that each and every life has meaning and relevance and can impact the whole.

This inner self is always asking to be fully recognized. Thus schooling no longer is looked at as a place of not only preparation for a professional future but schooling is considered for the personal realization for the individual to be fully actualized and pursue a life of caring for all of life from one's self to the greater whole.

Our world is changing and we see our global family as one. Looking at the world landscape it is obvious that we are amidst a grand revolution that is pushing us into a sea of new understanding. The scientific realization of interconnectivity and union translated into the field of education can lead educators to foster the understanding of evolution of consciousness. We can teach to know the self as one with others and that one can help build the potential of altering the world to be a better place for all. It is with this support of

the inner self, leading to inner peace for self-actualization to fostering greater peace for all.

Altering our educational philosophy for "Authentic Learning" becomes the source of teaching rather than the present day practice of schooling for information. Information can be acquired easily through many means. If educators would begin to realize that we are the forerunners of building culture then we would take this responsibility a little more to heart and work from the understanding of supporting the young person in his/her personal journey to becoming an authentic learner and person of caring.

The new emerging educational philosophy recognizes that within each and every one of us resides a Divine Spark that is the true essence of who we are. Relying on the divine spark we are able to learn the essence of educating for such principles as truth, justice, compassion and equity for all. Education then is able to forward the hope for a better world one in which each child has the opportunity to dream a dream of self-fulfillment within the context of the whole. The student's essence or divine spark is the mirror of self-acceptance and love of the other while learning to live in conscious awareness of the greater good.

The question then is how are principles and the concept of a true essence of the individual become translated into the subject areas needed in schools? How do we as educators prepare our young people to use these principles "respect for all life, reject violence, share with others, listen to understand, preserve the planet, and rediscover solidarity" as the overarching theme. We can begin to design curriculum for

academic growth but within its content includes principles for conscious life skills. These life skills are focused on participating in a global society as a positive member of our world community. We can educate and redesign our strategies for learning based on the study of the self from the life of the atom to progress in the outer world. This means studying from the inner Divine Spark to our place in the human family, our place in our community, our place in time, our place in the world and our place in our planetary universe. This curriculum includes all the expected academic basics but more importantly emphasizes the miracle of life, the importance of interdependence, and the recognition that consciousness exists and is what holds together through what we call the web of life.

This is the potential of educational reform or the reformation of the "I" into the understanding of wholeness of the human family. It is through education that a future generation can bring forth a culture that recognizes our present ills and become fully self realized as interconnected and interdependent and thus clearing the mind for inner and outer peace for one and for all.

As an educator, I define several modes or models for thinking about this potential. These modes or models are terms used to help categorize activities for use within the classroom setting and included in the model for Authentic Learning. An important conceptual model is "inquiry learning" and/or "reflective learning" that emphasizes the truth and acceptance that we each have an inherent wisdom. This wisdom needs to be explored and supported. Teaching needs to focus on asking the right questions and

offering the resources. Thus the teacher becomes a facilitator rather than the instructor. As a result of the reflective process for "altruistic learning" occurs implying to serve another's needs is equivalent to serving one's own needs. Another aspect of Authentic Learning is "experiential learning" that allows the learner to experience learning on a deeper more intense manner using experiences as a source for reflection and acquiring information. Examining the world and reaching personal and social conclusions leads to the needs for each individual to know and understand their relationship within the whole. Included in this thinking mode is "systems learning" so that we educate for the understanding that all parts belong to a whole. Holistic thinking is a process that allows us to incorporate the self while learning that the whole is greater than all of its parts within a system. Another model for thinking and including in building true authentic learning style is "transpersonal learning". This includes personal and interpersonal relationships as a means for learning about the self in relationship to the others for the building a future culture. All these models working together educate the individual learner to invent ideas while serving the greater good.

Education for living consciously using life's principles of justice, equity and goodness fosters a set of universal ethics. Ethics are a standard by which all humanity needs to adhere to for us to live successfully as one human family. Education offers this bridge from personal ethics to collective freedom. This freedom is expressed as harmony within the self and with others or known as where the heart and the mind unite bringing peace and deep understanding.

Code of Ethics: Actions Based on Selflessness and Love

LOVE for the form, voice, thoughts and spirit of each person

RESPECT for differences

HONESTY of our feelings, thoughts and behaviors; to be transparent

TRUTH in feelings and thoughts

COURAGE to take a stand

HUMILITY to reflect inner peace

WISDOM to be a seeker

The search for this authentic self, the universal human that lives as fulfilled and connected to source. For educators interested in methods of discovery of the divine spark there are certain types of exercises that fulfill this possibility.

REFLECT is the journey we take to awaken the inner self. The path may include meditation, contemplation, and or prayer. As we become still, we hear the inner calling of our authentic self and experience personal purpose.

The Inner Quest for the Authentic Self

As you go more deeply into the self, you realize that you are not defined by your surroundings, parents, culture or religion. Rather, inside you dwells a loving human being seeking full expression.

Questions

1. Who am I really as my authentic self?
2. What unique gifts do I bring to the world?
3. How can I manifest my inner dreams for the world?

CONNECT bridges the gap between self and others, leading to unity. Through deep compassion and listening, conflict transcendence, and non-violent

communication we learn that it is possible to live in harmony, weaving the interconnectedness of our family worldwide.

Deep Compassion for Others

You become conscious of how you can best express yourself in the world for the highest good. Transforming conflict, using language that recognizes the other, appreciating without judging, all these can occur when you no longer judge yourself. You begin to act as part of a whole. A sense of unity occurs that can be called love or spirituality in action.

Questions

1. How do I find connectedness and build a purposeful unity?
2. How do I hear the inner heart of another person?
3. How do I handle conflict in my life?

ACT is taking the inspired will to serve others in the world through individual actions, local projects and global work. These acts are based on spiritual principles and ethics of Spiritual Activism.

Knowing what to do

The third step is based on awareness of a

global community of young people who are waiting to connect with you. Together you are the new leaders of this evolving consciousness for social change. You share a growing awareness of how to live as stewards of all of life. From this consciousness, new models of how to live in our world emerge ensuring a sustainable future for all of humanity.

Questions

1. What does it mean to live as a Spiritual Activist?
2. What actions can I take to promote conscious social change?
3. What skills and abilities do I need to make a positive difference in the lives of others?

Our children's future lies in our hands. The mind is a tool used for learning but the wisdom of the heart is the driving guidance. As young people focus on inner reflection, they are called forth to do acts of kindness in their lives and in the lives of others. There are many examples of young people who have recognized their inner truth, living their Divine Spark, and set out into the world to make a difference.

- Lawrence of Liberia saw his father murdered and then ended up in a refugee camp to live in the same room as the murderer. Lawrence through inner reflection and prayer was able to forgive this man and come to peace with himself.
- Karoline's father was abducted and shot and Karoline met the man who committed this atrocity and forgave him through seeking and spiritual knowledge she learned to be at peace with him and her loss.
- In Nepal Jimmy attended many programs starting at age 22, became inspired and

now has built schools in rural Nepal serving over 5000 students.

- Mark from the Philippines started school bag programs based on children needing supplies to go to school as he had done and thus is now serving over 100 schools.
- Apeadu Center initiated by deeper learnings has in Ghana offered trainings to local school children from the area and programs for teachers on self-esteem and leadership for students for the past 10 years.
- Ashfaque raised funds to serve the many children during earthquake times with medical supplies and school materials.
- In Switzerland a group of youth work for many years on Free Hugs in the cities such as Berne, Zurich, Basel etc. breaking cultural barriers of touching and expressing feelings expressing their inner need to fulfill the understanding that we are one family of humanity., heart to heart.

In conclusion, it is a timely moment in our history of humanity. We are so fortunate to be born now and to have this great choice to walk into a brilliant future and redesign our systems. We educate to move beyond religious divides into the understanding that we are all spiritual beings. Our philosophical premise recognizes that all of life is sacred. Each of us contains that sacred divine spark and thus all know all life is to be valued and is valuable.

Our goal is to live in unitive syncretic experiences of our deepest understanding that we are collective species who may use our consciousness to evolve systems that bring us into an interdependent, interconnected harmonious family of humankind stewarding the needs of our earth.