Chapter 22

Soul Education for Children of the Earth

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ABSTRACT

We live in a timely moment in the history of humanity. 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. 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.

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, never before has never the future been more challenged by worldwide terrorism, poverty, rapid climate change and inadequate education as well as 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 (Pain, 2009), we will continue to waste our human and financial resources on 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 (Kelavkar, 2006). 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.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-3032-9.ch022
Education comes from the word educare…this means to draw forth or lead out (Berliner, 1979). Education is a calling…a vocation of passion for individuals who care about our next generation and our collective future. Educators today are often bogged down by the subjects they teach so that they often forget they are builders of this most important future - a future culture. The young people are not only inheritors of our past but are also our initiators into the next phase of cultural evolution. They are the architects for the coming phases that include social, cultural and global development. They have the potential to move beyond imitating what has come before, but rather to imagine the scaffolding for structures that lead us into a better future.

If we are to change our behaviors to realize our samenesses and our connectivity, then our educational system must also alter. Our systems need to reflect this deepest understanding of what it means to be human and to live at a time when the essence of a global society is truly and interconnectedness of all intentions and deeds. The need for moral education and the rising potential of the empowered voice of individuals has been in a process of evolution (Berkowitz & Oser, 2013). 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.

Our present day schools are institutionalized by rules and regulations and tend to be a holding a mechanistic view to maintain status quo (Reeves, 2006). The focus is on downloadable information. They are slowly becoming aware of the need to alter their purpose but are so reluctant and compelled to produce successful students - students that succeed in the world of materialism we have developed. Thus the focus is on success defined by financial success and the continuation of competition between individuals.

In soul education there is a letting go, an acceptance and at the same time growing understanding and acceptance of fulfillment of the self. In this model giving and receiving are vitally relevant. The soul becomes the expression and is in knowing that one is revealing and offering an individualized purpose (Miller, 2000).

Our Higher Consciousness is calling us to remember the true purpose of life. Our Higher Consciousness no longer wants to only function on an integrated personal level. Our Higher Consciousness is calling us into greater understanding. We are being asked to find deep appreciation of diversity and, yet, realization and integration that the sum of all parts do make a greater whole. We are the family of man. We are One Humanity. Our lives must encompass justice and sustainability.

World Service is the outer manifestation of the inner realization that we are all One. As I meet the other, I am meeting the self. As I meet the self, I have "givingness" for the other. If I do not feel depleted and fearful of not having, I give and I receive and am in balance with nature’s call. With this we collectively become builders of the new culture… the Culture of Peace.

There has been a declaration calling this the decade for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence (Schwebel, 2001). This manifesto is written and supported by all the living Nobel Laureates and UNESCO and in a resolution from the U.N. Those are only words and now each of us must translate these words into action. The tenets are: Respect All Life, Reject Violence, Share with Others, Preserve the Planet, and Rediscover Solidarity.

Educators are realizing that education needs to build the culture that unifies humanity. It is no longer realistic to imitate what has come before us but rather to step out and collectively build a unitive system based on the understanding of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as one human family.