

*Philosophical Foundations  
of Education*

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Education 605

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# *The Watch and the Watchmaker*

William Paley

[From *Natural Theology, or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity Collected from the Appearances of Nature* (1802)]

## **Statement of the Argument**

IN CROSSING A HEATH, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there, I might possibly answer, that, for anything I knew to the contrary, it had lain there for ever; nor would it, perhaps, be very easy to show the absurdity of this answer. But suppose I found a watch upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place, I should hardly think of the answer which I had given—that, for anything I knew, the watch might have always been there is answer serve for the Yet why should not this answer serve for the watch as well as for the stone? why is it not as admissible in the second case as in the first? For this reason, and for no other; viz., that, when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discover in the stone) that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose, e.g. that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day; that, if the different parts had been differently shaped from size from what they what they are, if a different size from what they are, or placed after any other manner, or in any other order than that in which they are placed, either no motion at all would have been carried on in the machine, or none which would have answered the use that is now served by it. To reckon up a few of the plainest of these parts, and of their offices, all tending to one result: We see a cylindrical box containing a coiled elastic spring, which, by its endeavor to relax itself, turns round the box. We next observe a flexible chain (artificially wrought for the sake of flexure) communicating the action of the spring from the box to the fusee. We then find a series of wheels, the teeth of which catch in, and apply to, each other, conducting the motion from the fusee to the balance, and from the balance to the pointer, and, at the same time, by the size and shape of those wheels, so regulating that motion as to terminate in causing an index, by an equable and measured progression, to pass over a given space in a given time. We take notice that the wheels are made of brass, in order to keep them from rust; the springs of steel, no other metal being so elastic; that over the face of the watch there is placed a glass, a material employed in no other part of the work, but in the room of which, if there had been any other than a transparent substance, the hour could not be seen without opening the case. This mechanism being observed, (it requires indeed an examination of the instrument, and perhaps some previous knowledge of the subject, to perceive and understand it; but being once, as we have said, observed and understood,) the inference, we

think, is inevitable, that the watch must have had a maker that there must have existed, at some time, and at some place or other, an artificer or artificers who formed it for the purpose which we find it actually to answer; who comprehended its construction, and designed its use.

I. Nor would it, I apprehend, weaken the conclusion, that we had never seen a watch made; that we had never known an artist capable of making one; that we were altogether incapable of executing such a piece of workmanship ourselves, or of understanding in what manner it was performed; all this being no more than what is true of some exquisite remains of ancient art, of some lost arts, and, to the generality of mankind, of the more curious productions of modern manufacture. Does one man in a million know how oval frames are turned? Ignorance of this kind exalts our opinion of the unseen and unknown artist's skill, if he be unseen and unknown, but raises no doubt in our minds of the existence and agency of such an artist, at some former time, and in some place or other. Nor can I perceive that it varies at all the inference, whether the question arise concerning a human agent, or concerning an agent of a different species, or an agent possessing, in some respect, a different nature.

II. Neither, secondly, would it invalidate our conclusion, that the watch sometimes went wrong, or that it seldom went exactly right. The purpose of the machinery, the design, and the designer, might be evident, and, in the case supposed, would be evident, in whatever way we accounted for the irregularity of the movement, or whether we could account for it or not. It is not necessary that a machine be perfect, in order to show with what design it was made; still less necessary, where the only question is, whether it were made with any design at all.

III. Nor, thirdly, would it bring any uncertainty into the argument, if there were a few parts of the watch, concerning which we could not discover, or had not yet discovered, in what manner they conduced to the general effect; or even some parts, concerning which we could not ascertain whether they conduced to that effect in any manner whatever. For, as to the first branch of the case, if by the loss, or disorder, or decay of the parts in question, the movement of the watch were found in fact to be stopped, or disturbed, or retarded, no doubt would remain in our minds as to the utility or intention of these parts, although we should be unable to investigate the manner according to which, or the connection by which, the ultimate effect depended upon their action or assistance; and the more complex is the machine, the more likely is this obscurity to arise. Then, as to the second thing supposed, namely, that there were parts which might be spared without prejudice to the movement of the watch, and that he had proved this by experiment, these superfluous parts, even if we were completely assured that they were such, would not vacate the reasoning which we had instituted concerning

other parts. The indication of contrivance remained, with respect to them, nearly as it was before.

IV. Nor, fourthly, would any man in his senses think the existence of the watch, with its various machinery, accounted for, by being told that it was one out of possible combinations of material forms; that whatever he had found in the place where he found the watch, must have contained some internal configuration or other; and that this configuration might be the structure now exhibited, viz., of the works of a watch, as well as a different structure.

V. Nor, fifthly, would it yield his inquiry more satisfaction, to be answered, that there existed in things a principle of order, which had disposed the parts of the watch into their present form and situation. He never knew a watch made by the principle of order; nor can he even form to himself an idea of what is meant by a principle of order, distinct from the intelligence of the watchmaker.

....

#### **Application of the Argument**

Every indication of contrivance, every manifestation of design, which existed in the watch, exists in the works of nature; with the difference, on the side of nature, of being greater and more, and that in a degree which exceeds all computation. I mean that the contrivances of nature surpass the contrivances of art, in the complexity, subtilty, and curiosity of the mechanism; and still more, if possible, do they go beyond them in number and variety; yet in a multitude of cases, are not less evidently mechanical, not less evidently contrivances, not less evidently accommodated to their end, or suited to their office, than are the most perfect productions of human ingenuity ....

\* \* \*

# *Semmelweis and Childbed Fever*

Carl Hempel

[From Carl Hempel, *Philosophy of Natural Science*, Prentice-Hall, 1966.]

As a simple illustration of some important aspects of scientific inquiry let us consider Semmelweis' work on childbed fever. Ignaz Semmelweis, a physician of Hungarian birth, did this work during the years from 1844 to 1848 at the Vienna General Hospital. As a member of the medical staff of the First Maternity Division in the hospital, Semmelweis was distressed to find that a large proportion of the women who were delivered of their babies in that division contracted a serious and often fatal illness known as puerperal fever or childbed fever. In 1844, as many as 260 out of 3,157 mothers in the First Division, or 8.2 per cent, died of the disease; for 1845, the death rate was 6.8 per cent, and for 1846, it was 11.4 per cent. These figures were all the more alarming because in the adjacent Second Maternity Division of the same hospital, which accommodated almost as many women as the First, the death toll from childbed fever was much lower: 2.3, 2.0, and 2.7 per cent for the same years. In a book that he wrote later on the causation and the prevention of childbed fever, Semmelweis describes his efforts to resolve the dreadful puzzle.

He began by considering various explanations that were current at the time; some of these he rejected out of hand as incompatible with well-established facts; others he subjected to specific tests.

One widely accepted view attributed the ravages of puerperal fever to "epidemic influences," which were vaguely described as "atmospheric-cosmic-telluric changes" spreading over whole districts and causing child-bed fever in women in confinement. But how, Semmelweis reasons, could such influences have plagued the First Division for years and yet spared the Second? And how could this view be reconciled with the fact that while the fever was raging in the hospital, hardly a case occurred in the city of Vienna or in its surroundings: a genuine epidemic, such as cholera, would not be so selective. Finally, Semmelweis notes that some of the women admitted to the First Division, living far from the hospital, had been overcome by labor on their way and had given birth in the street: yet despite these adverse conditions, the death rate from childbed fever among these cases of "street birth" was lower than the average for the First Division.

On another view, overcrowding was a cause of mortality in the First Division. But Semmelweis points out that in fact the crowding was heavier in the Second Division, partly as a result of the desperate efforts of patients to avoid assignment



to the notorious First Division. He also rejects two similar conjectures that were current, by noting that there were no differences between the two Divisions in regard to diet or general care of the patients.

In 1846, a commission that had been appointed to investigate the matter attributed the prevalence of illness in the First Division to injuries resulting from rough examination by the medical students, all of whom received their obstetrical training in the First Division. Semmelweis notes in refutation of this view that (a) the injuries resulting naturally from the process of birth are much more extensive than those that might be caused by rough examination; (b) the midwives who received their training in the Second Division examined their patients in much the same manner but without the same ill effects; (c) when, in response to the commission's report, the number of medical students was halved and their examinations of the women were reduced to a minimum, the mortality, after a brief decline, rose to higher levels than ever before.

Various psychological explanations were attempted. One of them noted that the First Division was so arranged that a priest bearing the last sacrament to a dying woman had to pass through five wards before reaching the sickroom beyond: the appearance of the priest, preceded by an attendant ringing a bell, was held to have a terrifying and debilitating effect upon the patients in the wards and thus to make them more likely victims of childbed fever. In the Second Division, this adverse factor was absent, since the priest had direct access to the sickroom. Semmelweis decided to test this conjecture. He persuaded the priest to come by a roundabout route and without ringing of the bell, in order to reach the sick chamber silently and unobserved. But the mortality in the First Division did not decrease.

A new idea was suggested to Semmelweis by the observation that in the First Division the women were delivered lying on their backs; in the Second Division, on their sides. Though he thought it unlikely, he decided "like a drowning man clutching at a straw," to test whether this difference in procedure was significant. He introduced the use of the lateral position in the First Division, but again, the mortality remained unaffected.

At last, early in 1847, an accident gave Semmelweis the decisive clue for his solution of the problem. A colleague of his, Kolletschka, received a puncture wound in the finger, from the scalpel of a student with whom he was performing an autopsy, and died after an agonizing illness during which he displayed the same symptoms that Semmelweis had observed in the victims of childbed fever. Although the role of microorganisms in such infections had not yet been recognized at the time, Semmelweis realized that "cadaveric matter" which the student's scalpel had introduced into Kolletschka's blood stream had caused his colleague's fatal illness.

And the similarities between the course of Kolletschka's disease and that of the women in his clinic led Semmelweis to the conclusion that his patients had died of the same kind of blood poisoning: he, his colleagues, and the medical students had been the carriers of the infectious material, for he and his associates used to come to the wards directly from performing dissections in the autopsy room, and examine the women in labor after only superficially washing their hands, which often retained a characteristic foul odor.

Again, Semmelweis put his idea to a test. He reasoned that if he were right, then childbed fever could be prevented by chemically destroying the infectious material adhering to the hands. He therefore issued an order requiring all medical students to wash their hands in a solution of chlorinated lime before making an examination. The mortality from childbed fever promptly began to decrease, and for the year 1848 it fell to 1.27 per cent in the First Division, compared to 1.33 in the Second.

In further support of his idea, or of his hypothesis, as we will also say, Semmelweis notes that it accounts for the fact that the mortality in the Second Division consistently was so much lower: the patients there were attended by midwives, whose training did not include anatomical instruction by dissection of cadavers.

The hypothesis also explained the lower mortality among "street births": women who arrived with babies in arms were rarely examined after admission and thus had a better chance of escaping infection.

Similarly, the hypothesis accounted for the fact that the victims of childbed fever among the newborn babies were all among those whose mothers had contracted the disease during labor; for then the infection could be transmitted to the baby before birth, through the common bloodstream of mother and child, whereas this was impossible when the mother remained healthy.

Further clinical experiences soon led Semmelweis to broaden his hypothesis. On one occasion, for example, he and his associates, having carefully disinfected their hands, examined first a woman in labor who was suffering from a festering cervical cancer; then they proceeded to examine twelve other women in the same room, after only routine washing without renewed disinfection. Eleven of the twelve patients died of puerperal fever. Semmelweis concluded that childbed fever can be caused not only by cadaveric material, but also by "putrid matter derived from living organisms."

\* \* \*

# *Romeo and Juliet*

## William Shakespeare

Act 2, Scene II, Capulet's orchard.

*[Enter Romeo]*

ROMEO: He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

*[Juliet appears above at a window]*

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

Who is already sick and pale with grief,

That thou her maid art far more fair than she:

Be not her maid, since she is envious;

Her vestal livery is but sick and green

And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.

## Ignasz Semmelweis's Discovery at Vienna General Hospital:

<i>Death rates</i>	First Division	Second Division
1844	8.2 %	2.3 %
1845	6.8 %	2.0 %
1846	11.4 %	2.7 %

Hypotheses:

- Epidemics?
- Overcrowding?
- Rough handling?
- The priest's route?
- Back versus side delivery?
- Then: scalpel wound of colleague Kolletschka

1848	1.27 %	1.33 %
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## Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* – Three Hypotheses?

“Juliet is the sun” means:

1. Juliet is the male offspring of Mr. and Mrs. Capulet.
2. The sun is very hot, so Romeo is saying, “Wow, Juliet is *hot*” (in the 21<sup>st</sup> century contemporary sense of *sexy*).
3. The sun is a strong source of light, and light makes possible life, color, and warmth. Romeo means that Juliet inspires in him the emotional correlates of those features.

## *Quotations on Faith*

1. “For whose sake is it that the proof [of the truth of the Scriptures] is sought? Faith does not need it; aye, it must even regard the proof as its enemy.” (Søren Kierkegaard)
2. “Reason is the greatest enemy that faith has; it struggles against the divine word, treating with contempt all that emanates from God. The Virgin birth was unreasonable; so was the Resurrection; so were the Gospels, the sacraments, the pontifical prerogatives, and the problem of life everlasting.” (Martin Luther)
3. “If we submit everything to reason, our religion will have no mysterious and supernatural element. If we offend the principles of reason, our religion will be absurd and ridiculous.” (Blaise Pascal)
4. “Credibile est, quia ineptum est.” (Tertullian)
5. “If anyone had written to me that the truth was outside of Christ, I would rather remain with Christ than with the truth.” (Fyodor Dostoevsky, letter to a benefactor)
6. “It is a quality of faith that it wrings the neck of reason. . . . But how? It holds to God’s Word: lets it be right and true, no matter how foolish and impossible it sounds. So did Abraham take his reason captive and slay it, in as much as he believed God’s word, wherein was promised him from his unfruitful and as it were dead wife, Sarah, God would give him seed. . . . There is no doubt faith and reason mightily fell out in Abraham’s heart about this matter, yet at last did faith get the better, and overcame and strangled reason, that all-cruellest and most fatal enemy of God. So, too, do all other faithful men who enter with Abraham the gloom and hidden darkness of faith: they strangle reason . . . and thereby offer to God the all-acceptablest sacrifice and service that can ever be brought to him.” (Martin Luther)
7. Abraham surrendered himself to the “paradox which is capable of transforming murder into a holy act well pleasing to God.” “He believed the preposterous.” “This is . . . clear to the knight of faith, so the only thing that can save him is the absurd, and this he grasps by faith.” (Søren Kierkegaard)
8. “So far as I can remember, there is not one word in the Gospels in praise of intelligence.” (Bertrand Russell)

## *Sex and Love—Three Ideals*

<i>Platonic love</i>	<i>Romantic Love</i>	<i>Promiscuity</i>
<i>Chastity is the ideal</i>	<i>Romantic love/sex is the ideal</i>	<i>Sex without commitment is the ideal</i>
<i>Sex is bad and love is good</i>	<i>Sex is good and love is good</i>	<i>Sex is good and love is an illusion</i>
<i>Sex is physical and love is spiritual</i>	<i>Sex is the physical aspect and love is the spiritual aspect of the same act</i>	<i>Sex is physical and love is a chemical state</i>
<i>The physical is bad and the spiritual is good</i>	<i>Both physical and spiritual are good</i>	<i>The physical is real and the spiritual is unreal or a byproduct</i>
<i>The physical and the spiritual are different and opposed to each other</i>	<i>The physical and the spiritual are two aspects of one being</i>	<i>The spiritual is reduced to the physical</i>
<i>(All spiritual, no physical)</i>	<i>(Integrate physical and spiritual)</i>	<i>(All physical, no spiritual)</i>

# *Taking Responsibility*

Nathaniel Branden

## **Introduction**

I will begin with a personal story that illuminates a primary aspect and benefit of self-responsibility that is rarely understood, the achievement of happiness.

As I approached my sixty-first birthday a few years ago, I found myself thinking a good deal about the subject of happiness, and about making its attainment my conscious purpose. At that time I was embarking on a project that had the potential to generate a good deal of stress, and I was determined that my daily mood and the harmony of my marriage not be adversely affected.

I thought about my wife Devers, who is the most consistently happy human being I have ever known, as well as one of the most self-sufficient. When I met her I felt that I had never encountered anyone for whom joy was more her “nature.” Yet her life had not been easy. Widowed at twenty-four, she was left to raise two small children with very little money and no one to help her. When we met, she had been single for many years, had achieved success in a number of jobs, and never spoke of past struggles with any hint of self pity. I saw her hit by disappointing experiences from time to time, saw her sad or muted for a few hours (rarely longer than a day), then saw her bounce back to her natural state of joy without any evidence of denial or repression. It took me some time to fully believe what I was seeing: that her happiness was *real*—and larger than any adversity.

When I would ask her about her resilience, she would say, “I’m *committed* to being happy.” And she added, “That takes self discipline.” She also had a habit I thought unusual: She almost never went to sleep at night without taking time to review everything good in her life; those were typically her last thoughts of the day. I thought this was an important clue to what I wanted to understand about the psychology of happiness.

We talked about the fact that there is a tendency for most people to explain feelings of happiness or unhappiness in terms of the external circumstances of their lives. They explain happiness by pointing to the positives; they explain unhappiness by pointing to the negatives. The implication is that events *determine* whether they are happy; they take little or no responsibility for their state. I had always been convinced, as had Devers, that our own attitudes have far more to do with how happy we are than do any external circumstances.

I said to her: Take a man who is basically disposed to be happy, meaning that he feels happiness is his natural condition, and is happy a significantly greater amount of the time than he is unhappy. Let some misfortune befall him—the loss of a job, or a marriage, or being hit by some physical disability—and for some time he will suffer. But check with him a few weeks or months or a year later (depending on the severity of the problem) and he will be happy again. In contrast, take a man who is basically disposed to be unhappy, who feels unhappiness is more natural than joy, and who is unhappy a significantly greater amount of the time than he is happy. Let something wonderful happen to him—getting a promotion, inheriting a lot of money, falling in love with an exciting woman who returns his feelings—and for a while he will be happy. But check with him a little later down the line and very likely he will be unhappy again. We talked about research we had read that substantiated these observations.\*

I have always considered myself an essentially happy person and have managed to stay happy under some fairly difficult circumstances. However, I have known periods of struggle and suffering, as we all have, and at times over the years I felt there was some error I was making and that not all of the pain was necessary. But what was I failing to grasp? That question preoccupied me now that I had decided to make happiness not merely a desire but a conscious purpose, to take a more proactive role in achieving the emotional state I wanted.

I thought of something I had noticed about myself. I sometimes joked that with each decade my childhood seemed to get happier. If you asked me at twenty or at sixty to describe my early years, the report would not have been different in its key facts, but in its emphasis. At twenty, the negatives in my childhood were in the front of my mind, so to speak, and the positives were at the back; at sixty, the reverse was true. As I grew older, my perspective and sense of what was important about those early years changed. This was another clue.

The more I reflected on these issues, and studied and thought about the happy individuals I encountered, the more clear it became that happy people process their experiences differently than unhappy people do. Happy people process their experiences so that, as quickly as possible, positives are held brightly in the foreground of consciousness and negatives are held dimly in the background. This is essential to understanding them.

But then I was stopped by the thought that none of these ideas and observations is entirely new to me and that at some level they are familiar. Why, then, have I not implemented them better throughout my life? Once asked, I knew the answer: Somehow long ago I had decided that if I did not spend a significant

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\* See, for example, D.G. Myers' *The Pursuit of Happiness*.



amount of time focused on the negatives in my life—the disappointments and setbacks—I was being evasive, irresponsible toward reality, insufficiently *serious* about my life. Expressing this belief in words for the first time, I saw how absurd it was. It would be reasonable *only if there were corrective actions I could be taking that I was avoiding taking*. But if I was taking *every* possible action, then a further focus on negatives *had no merit at all*.

If something is wrong, the question to ask ourselves is: Are there actions I can take to improve or correct the situation? If there are, I will take them. If there aren't, I do my best not to torment myself about what is beyond my control. Admittedly, this last task is not always easy, but it can be learned if one is determined.

The past several years, since making these identifications, have been the most consistently happy I have ever known, even though there were plenty of things about which to be agitated. I find that I deal with problems more quickly than I did in the past and that I recover more quickly from disappointments. I take more responsibility for my emotional state than I did when I was younger. Doing so does not feel like an onerous new task but like an experience of enhanced power—and liberation.

One of the ways I have learned to implement this policy, which I now teach to my therapy clients, is by beginning each day with two questions: *What good in my life?* and *What needs to be done?* The first question keeps us focused on the positives. The second reminds us that our life and well-being are our own responsibility and keeps us proactive.

The world has rarely treated happiness as a state worthy of serious respect. And yet if we see someone who, in spite of life's adversities, is happy a good deal of the time, we should recognize that we are looking at a spiritual achievement—and one worth aspiring to. If we wish to achieve such happiness, and not merely wait for events or other people to make us happy, we need to grasp how intimately happiness is tied to self responsibility and specifically, in this case, to taking responsibility for our emotions.

I begin with this story because the basic theme of this book is the liberating power of self-responsibility as a daily practice and orientation that we must grow into if we are to lead satisfying lives.

One characteristic of children is that they are almost entirely dependent on others. They look to others for the fulfillment of most of their needs. As they mature, they increasingly rely on their own efforts. One characteristic of successfully evolved adults is that they learn to take responsibility for their own lives—physi-

cally, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. We think of this as the virtue of independence or self-reliance. As an ideal of healthy development, it is basic to the American tradition of individualism.

But what such an ideal means precisely is not self-evident. We are social beings. The realization of our human potential can take place only in society. The participation and cooperation of others play crucially important roles in the meeting of most of our needs and in the attainment of almost all of our goals. Over 90 percent of us who work for a living do so in organizations, and the ability to function effectively as a member of a team is usually an imperative of success. On the more personal level, most of us do not seek a life of isolation. We choose to marry (and remarry) or share our lives with companions. Studies of happy people suggest the importance of a gratifying relationship with at least one other human being. The desire to experience some sense of community seems universal.

What then does it mean to speak of the virtue of self-reliance? What does it mean to celebrate the value of individualism? What does it mean to uphold the practice of self-responsibility?

These are the questions this book addresses.

In today's information economy, in which mind-work has so largely replaced muscle-work, in which authoritarian, hierarchical structures are giving way to more open, communicative structures, and in which cognitive skills are of paramount importance for successful adaptation to a rapidly changing global marketplace, the issue of self-responsibility has acquired a new urgency. Passive compliance has less and less economic utility. What business organizations need today are people who are willing and able to *think*—to be self-directing and self-managing—to respond to problems proactively rather than merely wait for someone else's solutions—to be *initiators*—to be, in a word, self-responsible.

In a world in which we are exposed to more information, more options, more philosophies, and more perspectives than ever before in our history, in which we must *choose* the values by which we will live our life (rather than unquestioningly follow some tradition for no better reason than that our parents did), we need to be willing to stand on our own judgment and trust our own intelligence—to look at the world through our own eyes—to chart our life-course and *think through* how to achieve the future we want—to commit ourselves to continuous questioning and learning—to be, in a word, self-responsible.

Let me caution against one common misunderstanding at the outset. Too often the idea of self-responsibility is interpreted to mean the taking on of new

weights and obligations. It is equated with drudgery. Yet operating self-responsibly may entail saying no to burdens one never should have accepted in the first place. Many people find it easier to say yes to unreasonable requests than to stand up for their own interests. Taking on responsibilities that properly belong to someone else means behaving irresponsibly toward oneself. All of us need to know where we end and someone else begins; we need to understand *boundaries*. We need to know what is and is not up to us, what is and is not within our control, and what is and is not our responsibility.

In coming to understand what self-responsibility and independence mean and do not mean, we see that they are essential to personal fulfillment, basic to a moral life, and the foundation of social cooperation. We see that the conventional tendency to cast individualism as the enemy of community and culture rests on a profound misunderstanding.

Independence and self-responsibility are indispensable to psychological well-being. The essence of independence is the practice of thinking for oneself and reflecting critically on the values and beliefs offered by others—of living by one's own mind. The essence of self-responsibility is the practice of making oneself the cause of the effects one wants, as contrasted with a policy of hoping or demanding that someone else “do something” while one's own contribution is to wait and suffer. It is through independence and self-responsibility that we attain personal power. It is through the opposite that we relinquish our power.

In his book of the same title, Charles J. Sykes argues persuasively that we have become “a nation of victims.” Clearly this syndrome is related to the diminished respect for self-responsibility in our culture. “I couldn't help it!” seems to be the most popular theme song of our day. It echoes the pronouncement of many of our social scientists that no one can help anything. Apart from the fact that this assertion cannot be substantiated and is false, it generates social consequences of incalculable harm. The abandonment of personal accountability makes self-esteem, as well as decent and benevolent social relationships, impossible. In its worst manifestation, it becomes a license to kill. If we are to have a world that works, we need a culture of accountability. It is toward that end that I write this book.

Opponents of accountability, professing to be humanitarians, often insist that people are sometimes hit by adversities beyond their control. True enough. But when people are down, they are better helped when they are awakened to the resources they do possess than when they are told they have none. The latter approach often masks condescension and contempt as compassion, whether practiced by a university professor, parent, spouse, legislator, or social activist. It is far easier to proclaim a concern for others than to think through what is most likely to be productive.

To tell a young criminal, for example, that when he robs a grocery store and brutalizes the owner, he is not really the guilty party—that the guilt belongs to the “system” that “oppresses” him—is morally corrupting both for the criminal and for the society in which he lives. To tell an unwed mother of sixteen about to have her second child that she is a helpless victim of patriarchy or capitalism and that state help is not charity but her rightful due, that she is entitled to food and shelter and medical care provided by what-does-it-matter-by-whom?—she is *entitled*—is morally corrupting and psychologically disempowering.

As a practicing psychotherapist, I regard my primary task as assisting people to access strengths they may not know they possess or do not know how to access so they may cope more effectively with the challenges of life. Whatever grief or anger they may first have to work through, the question they must ultimately confront is: Now what am I going to do? What options—what possibilities of action—exist for me? How can I improve the quality of my life? And to meet these questions, we have to discover that we are more than our problems. Our interests are not served when as adults, we see ourselves as helpless victims, even though we might have been as children.

Note that my advocacy of self-responsibility is very different from that of the conservative traditionalist or religionist who complains that there is “too much individualism” in our culture and that people need to learn greater self-responsibility out of duty to society (and/or to “God.”) I am an advocate of individualism. I am also an advocate of an ethics of rational or enlightened self-interest. And it is because of that moral philosophy that I champion the practice of self-responsibility. To live responsibly is an act of intelligence and integrity, not of self-sacrifice.

In my past writing I dealt with self-responsibility exclusively as a source of self-esteem. In this book the focus is wider. Self-responsibility is shown to be the key to personal effectiveness in virtually every sphere of life—from working on one’s marriage to pursuing a career to developing into an increasingly whole and balanced human being. It is both a psychological and an ethical principle. It constitutes the moral foundation of social existence and therefore has political ramifications as well.

Self-responsibility, independence, and autonomy are words to which some people respond with antagonism. Many people and groups today embrace the psychology of helplessness and victimhood and prefer to explain all their difficulties and struggles in terms of the actions of others. Given the amount of cruelty and injustice in the world, this preference is easy enough to rationalize. But there is also in our culture a countervailing tendency—a growing appreciation of the importance of self-reliance and of the need to take our destiny into our own hands.

One evidence for this is the change in recent decades in the values parents are most eager to instill in their children.

In the nineteen-twenties a well-known study was conducted to identify the traits that parents in this country most prized in their children. The list was topped by traits associated with conformity and with dependence. Ranked highest were “loyalty to the church,” “strict obedience,” and “good manners.” Traits associated with autonomy, such as “independence” and “tolerance,” were rated low on the scale. Surveys conducted during the sixties, seventies, and eighties, however, increasingly reflect a radical shift of priorities—a reversal, in fact. Today parents most wish to see traits linked to autonomy in their children, such as “good sense,” “sound judgment,” “being independent,” and “being tolerant,” or comfortable dealing with people of other races and cultures. In contrast, “loyalty to the church,” “strict obedience,” and “good manners” have greatly diminished in popularity; they are now the preferred values of no more than 25 percent of those surveyed. This growing esteem for autonomy is found among white-collar and blue-collar families alike. And it is not confined to this country. A similar trend has been identified in Germany, Italy, England, and Japan.\*

We are a long way from fully understanding and accepting the practice of self-responsibility as a way of life, with everything it entails personally and socially. To many people, some of what it entails may be not only challenging but disturbing—or worse. But there are stirrings of awareness. It just may be that self-responsibility is an idea whose time has come.

In this book I have four goals: to illuminate the meaning and implications of self-responsibility as a way of living and of being in the world; to show that this practice is not an onerous burden but a source of joy and personal power; to establish that we create our selves, shape our identity, through what we are willing to take responsibility for; and to demonstrate that self-responsibility, as well as self-reliance and individualism are essential to the well-being of our society.

On a more personal note, my hope for the reader is that he or she will find in this book a path to expanded awareness, heightened energy, greater personal effectiveness, and a wider vision of life’s possibilities.

## **Chapter 1: Toward Autonomy**

The most exciting event I can remember from the tenth year of my life was getting my first pair of *serious* long pants. They were dark blue and almost formal,

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\* “From Obedience to Independence,” by Anne Remley. *Psychology Today*, October 1988.

not at all what a child would wear. They were meant for special occasions only, but I recall many times putting them on and walking up and down our street, admiring myself and wanting others to appreciate how distant I was from childhood. They were, I imagined, pants that might be worn by a businessman, or a doctor, or a “man of the world” who supported himself, managed his own life, and was engaged in doing something important. In other words, a *man*.

A “man,” I felt then, without the words to express it, was someone who was independent, knew what he wanted, was in charge of his life, and certainly did not live with his parents. Someone who paid his own way, whose work meant creativity and joy. Someone who was cheerfully self-responsible and self-reliant. I thought of these traits as romantic, even heroic. (I still do, except that I would not limit the vision to the male gender.) And my symbol for that glamour figure was my dark blue trousers.

They were the promise and advance glimpse of a future I felt was beckoning and pulling me forward, toward a life where I would choose all my goals, where I would be answerable to no one (I did not yet understand the complexities of marriage), and where I could be the most important thing I knew of: *independent*.

Children’s lives were managed by others; grown-ups, I thought, managed their own lives. If someone asked me what I wanted most in the world, I would have answered, “To be a grown-up.”

I do not recall ever thinking about it consciously, but I am sure I assumed all my contemporaries felt as I did and were as fully impatient to attain adulthood. Today I know that this was not necessarily true. I could not have realized then and did not fully discover until I began the practice of psychotherapy that many grown-ups long to be children and in fact have never ceased being children. They look to others to tell them what to do. In important respects, they long to be taken care of, to be spared the necessity of thought, effort, and responsibility.

I had assumed that development from childhood to adulthood happened naturally and more or less automatically. I did not know how much more complex the truth was. I did not know how many things could go wrong or how many hazards there were along the way.

### **Selves Struggling to Emerge**

No one comes into this world independent, autonomous, or self-responsible. This state of being is a product of *development*: It represents an achievement. Indeed, as I have discussed in previous books, no one is born an individual. In the begin-

ning we are raw material. An individual is what we become as a result of successful growth and development. Our psychological birth in the full sense happens much later than our biological birth: The process takes not minutes or hours but years.

The natural progression from infancy to adulthood is from dependence to independence, from external support to self-support, from non-responsibility to self-responsibility. This is a process of *individuation*, which means separating, emerging, becoming whole, and fully becoming an individual. There are many stages to this developmental progression and they are not always negotiated successfully.

In our path toward adulthood, the attainment of physical maturity is the easiest part and is usually attained without difficulty. Intellectual, psychological, and spiritual maturity are another matter. At any step the process can be interrupted, frustrated, blocked, or sidetracked, either by an environment that obstructs rather than supports our growth, such as a home life that subjects us to gross irrationality, unpredictability, violence, and fear, or by choices and decisions that we make that are intended to be adaptive but turn out to be self-destructive. Such a choice, for instance, would be to deny and disown perceptions and feelings so that, short-term, life is made more acceptable, although in the process we give up pieces of ourself. Then growth is thwarted, intelligence is subverted, and many of the self's riches are left deep in the psyche, unmined. Like a sculptor's emerging figure, most of us remain trapped in an unfinished state, our potential felt rather than seen.

I recall a twenty-six-year-old woman, Julia K., who came to me in a state of crisis because her husband had left her and she felt terrified at the prospect of working for a living. "What do I know about the marketplace?" she cried. "What skills do I have that anyone would pay money for?" She had never considered it necessary to learn how to take care of herself in the world; she had been raised to believe that that was what husbands were for. When Julia was growing up, no one had thought it necessary or desirable to stimulate her mind, ask her what she thought, encourage her independence, or foster her self-reliance; and she had lacked the will to fight through on her own. Until the age of nineteen, when she married, her parents had made all her important decisions; then her husband had taken over that responsibility. Emotionally, Julia felt herself to be a child, with a child's level of self-sufficiency. The prospect of making independent choices and decisions, even about the simplest, most mundane matters—let alone going out in search of a job—filled her with anxiety.

"My alimony is only for three years," she informed me. It was if she had said, "The doctors have given me only three years to live." The idea of taking care

of herself seemed to be utterly alien to her. And yet it could not have been entirely alien, because something led her to ask, “Do you think I could learn to be a *grown-up*?”

In therapy she was invited to struggle with the questions, “Who am I? What do I think? What do I feel? What do I want? What am I willing to take responsibility for? How can I translate what I am learning into action?” It was through confronting these issues and moving through the terror they initially evoked that Julia slowly learned to create herself, to give birth to an adult self capable of supporting her own existence.

The choice to exercise consciousness, to think and look at the world through one’s own eyes, is the basic act of self-responsibility. I recall a fifty-three-year-old man, Andrew M., saying to me, as an example of the kind of issue he wanted to work on in therapy, “I always took it for granted I would support the same political party as my parents. Everyone in our family, all our relatives, vote the straight party ticket and always have. I think it would feel funny to vote differently. The idea of it makes me anxious. But, you know, a friend took me to a lecture of yours, and afterwards I began to wonder, Why do I take my party affiliation as natural when I’ve never really thought about these issues in my whole life? Something you said hit me—what I’ve been calling ‘thinking’ has just been bouncing around other people’s opinions inside my head. I’ve never taken responsibility for an independent judgment. Sometimes I feel like I don’t quite exist.”

There is nothing remarkable about Andrew’s statement except its explicitness. Millions of voters identify with one political party or another because that’s what their families do. If asked what political or philosophical principles, or what thought processes led them to their orientation, they would have great difficulty answering and might resent the question. And there are many people who, having almost never had an independent thought, feel they “don’t quite exist.” But some spark of independence—some sense of responsibility to his own life—flickered in Andrew and led him to question his passivity. “What I’d like to have,” he said, “are some opinions of my own.”

For Andrew, the struggle toward autonomy and self-responsibility entailed thinking about the ideas accepted and propounded by his family, learning to distinguish their voices from his own, paying attention to his feelings, bringing awareness to internal signals of every kind, and making an effort to understand what things he read in the newspaper or books or heard on television that exposed him to a variety of viewpoints, and in the end taking responsibility for answering the questions, “What do I know to be true? What do I value? What do I respect? What am I willing to stand up for?” It was through struggling with these ques-



tions, learning to discover and honor his own sight, that he discovered the meaning of independence. The process was formidable. Andrew's dread of isolation and aloneness was not overcome easily.

The practice of self-responsibility is both an expression of our successfully achieved adulthood—our individuation—and also a means of attaining it, of bringing ourselves more completely into reality, shaping identity, and transforming potentiality into actuality.

*Who I am may be understood as a function of what I am willing to take responsibility for.*

### **Individuation**

The stages of our development can be tracked in terms of our increasing capacity for autonomous (self-directed, self-regulated) functioning.

Birth itself is the beginning of this process: We leave our first matrix, the supporting structure of the womb, and begin to exist as a separate entity. While we are physically separate, however, we do not yet experience ourselves as separate. There is no ego. Several months will pass before we fully grasp physical boundaries, before we know where our body ends and the external world (including the mothering figure), begins. As brain, nervous system, and body develop, we accomplish one of our earliest and most important development tasks—our first discovery of *self*.

The grasping of *separateness*, the ability to distinguish between self and not-self, is the base of all subsequent development. Students of infant and child psychology call the process of achieving this awareness *separation and individuation*. In this context *individuation* refers to the second and overlapping part of the process, when basic motor and cognitive skills, as well as a beginning sense of physical and personal identity, are acquired and lay the foundation for the child's autonomy, his or her capacity for inner direction and self-regulation.

However, challenges of separation and individuation are not confined to the early years of life. When a man hits a spiritual crisis in midlife and feels compelled to question the values and goals of a lifetime, to redefine how he sees himself and what he wants for the rest of his years, he is separating from his past in order to open to his future and, this, too, is a process of individuation. When a woman who has been married for many years is suddenly divorced or widowed, and has to confront the question of who she is now that she is no longer someone's wife, she has to create a new sense of identity and this, too, is a process of

individuation. Whenever someone's decades-old conception of himself is shattered and a new, expanded self-concept emerges, this a process of individuation.

The pattern from infancy onward is always the same: We say good-bye to one level of development so as to say hello to another. Saying hello to childhood means saying good-bye to infancy; saying hello to adulthood means saying good-bye to adolescence; saying hello to a new marriage or a new career means saying good-bye to the old one. This is why growth is sometimes represented metaphorically as a series of deaths and rebirths, and why growth can be frightening: It flings us from the known toward the unknown.

Without going into the technicalities of developmental psychology, I need to say a few more words about how a mature human self emerges, so as to establish the place of autonomy and self-responsibility in the human story.

The self that develops in the first year of life is a *body-self*. If an infant could grasp and answer the question, "Who are you?"—the answer would be, "I am my body." This is where identity originates.

Boundaries are essential to the experience of selfhood, and the first and most basic boundary is physical. This fact may help us to understand why physical or sexual abuse can be so psychologically devastating. When a young person's body-boundary is violated, it undermines his or her sense of self.

An infant exists as a separate body before acquiring consciousness of an independent body-self. Similarly, a child has feelings and emotions before clearly recognizing them as aspects of his or her self—that is, before developing an *emotional-self*. The body-self typically develops between the fifth and ninth months; the emotional-self develops between the first and third years. Until both stages of development have been reached, an infant does not clearly differentiate its emotional-physiological experiences from those of its mother or anyone in the environment. Feelings and emotions exist but are not clearly differentiated, and there is no awareness of whose they are.

"I" no longer means only "my body"; now it means "my feelings and emotions and my body." It is interesting to note that among persons who are strongly disposed to form "codependent relationships," these boundaries have never been fully established, so that the feelings of others are sometimes treated as our own. Certainly "codependency," in which one's own identity is inappropriately intertwined with that of another at the expense of one's own well-being, reflects a failure of adequate individuation.

Between the third and sixth years the child learns to think and to recognize ownership of thoughts. The child learns to express feelings and wants verbally, to announce perceptions, to make (more advanced) connections and integrations, to make distinctions, and to use thoughts to regulate behavior. This is obviously a more advanced stage of autonomy. The child is now more of a *person*. A new sense of “I” forms that both includes and goes beyond what has been before. The child acquires a *mental-self*.

The child has shifted from “I am my body” to “I am my feelings and emotions and my body” to “I am my thoughts and also my feelings and emotions and body.”

Notice that the experience of self keeps expanding. It contains earlier levels of self-awareness and goes beyond them. Selves *grow*. What concerns us here is *the direction in which they are growing—what they are growing toward*.

Each of the three stages I have mentioned plays an essential role in laying the foundation for a well-developed sense of identity. There are higher levels of development, to be sure, but when these three basic levels are not negotiated successfully pathology develops.

Briefly, students of development associate a failure of appropriate growth at stage one with psychosis (no clear, differentiated sense of self and reality); a failure at stage two with borderline disorders (weak emotional boundaries, overwhelming anxiety and depression); and a failure at stage three with neurosis (resulting from the disowning and repressing of “unacceptable” thoughts and feelings, and showing up in such classic “neurotic” symptoms as hypochondria, obsessive-compulsive behavior, irrational fears, and the like).

With the emergence of a mental-self, a child attains new powers. These include the ability to deny, disown, and repress thoughts, feelings, emotions, and memories that evoke anxiety: to cut off aspects of the self and to shrink the *experience* of self, so as to function with less distress. While the intention is to protect emotional equilibrium, such repression is self-constricting, diminishing, alienating, and growth-arresting.

One aspect of the individuation process later in life is the discovering, owning, and integrating of previously repressed material, thereby expanding the experience of self and strengthening self-esteem. A child can disown feelings of anger, lust, excitement, ambition, or any other agitating and “unacceptable” emotion, and then, years later, learn to reclaim these denied parts and to declare, “This, too, is part of me, or an expression of me,” and thus to achieve a richer and

more balanced sense of identity. To accept and integrate previously disowned or undiscovered aspects of self is basic to psychological growth and well-realized individuality. Not only emotions, but also thoughts, attitudes, talents, values, and other resources may need to be reclaimed; and as they are, more of who we are emerges from the rock of potentiality.

As we move along the path of individuation through childhood to adolescence, we grow in knowledge, skills, and the ability to process information. While not yet in possession of the self-reliance possible to an adult, by adolescence we have taken a big step beyond the dependency of our earlier years. We have grown in personal power. Our thinking is less tied to the immediate sensory environment. We have shifted from concrete, sense-bound thinking to increasingly abstract thinking. We are learning to think conceptually and in principles, grasping more and more complex relationships and building higher and higher structures of knowledge.

In step with this process, our sense of self keeps evolving. To the extent that our development is successful, our mind and its cognitive processes—thinking, understanding, learning—become our primary source of identity and security. *Self-reliance is reliance on one's consciousness—on one's power of awareness.*

This state is the culmination of a journey that began with separation from the womb and went on to separation from the mother and separation from and transcendence of one form of environmental support after another. Not that external supports do not play a role for adults; they do. But the climax of individuation is the shifting of the *primary* support from the external to the internal, from the environment to the self. In terms of survival and well-being, this occurs when we accept basic responsibility for our existence: when we learn to rely predominantly on our own thought and effort for the fulfillment of our needs and goals. In terms of self-esteem, it occurs when we and not others become the primary source of our approval.

A basic goal in therapy is to assist the client to move toward this state of being by shifting authority and power from the world to the self. A young man—Mark R.—consulted me because, having graduated college at the age of twenty-four, he was under enormous pressure to enter the family business. It was a company that manufactured leather goods, which his father had founded decades earlier and which provided employment for many uncles, aunts, and cousins, apart from other employees. Mark was regarded as the “brain” of the family, and it had long been his father’s dream that one day his son would replace him as head of the company.

But Mark had a lifelong fascination with philosophy and dreamed of acquiring a Ph.D. and becoming a professor—a profession which his parents and other relatives found incomprehensible, unrelated to the “real world.” He came to see me because he was torn between, on the one hand, his love for his family and his desire to retain their approval, and, on the other hand, his passion for work that would take him outside the sphere of his family’s understanding. I pointed out that his conflict itself was philosophical because it entailed choosing among competing values; and also that it was psychological because what he was struggling with was less like an unsolved problem in logic than a choice between motivation by love versus motivation by fear. The love derived from the joy he associated with working in the field of philosophy; the fear derived from anxiety about losing the emotional support of his family.

“Nothing wrong with wanting your family’s approval,” I said, “But the question is, What price are you willing to pay to keep it?”

He answered, “I feel like what they want from me in exchange for their blessing is that I sacrifice my soul.”

“And what,” I went on, “do you imagine will be the consequences if you give them what they want?”

He whispered sadly, “I feel like the most valuable part of me will die. My self-esteem, yes, but more than that, more than my self-esteem—my fire and enthusiasm for life.”

I remarked that when we surrender the first, we almost inevitably lose the second. “It doesn’t sound like a profitable trade,” I said.

In a later session Mark said to me, “I’m beginning to see that choosing the career path that feels right for me means standing totally and absolutely on my own judgment, living self-responsibly at a very deep level, not just financially, which is easy, but also *spiritually*, if you know what I mean.”

If the basic meaning of “spiritual” is “pertaining to consciousness” (in contrast to “material:” which means “pertaining to or constituted by matter”), then of course Mark was right. It *was* a spiritual battle in which he was engaged, having everything to do with individuation and autonomy. In the end Mark decided in favor of his own career preference, and after a difficult year his family adjusted to his decision, although Mark felt that some element of closeness was irretrievably lost. “Maybe that’s a necessary part of growing up,” he said at our final session.

## Thinking About Values

Moral or ethical values are principles that guide our actions in issues and matters open to our choice. If we did not have to make choices—if we couldn't pursue many different goals by many different means—we would not need a code of morality. If our life and well-being did not depend on our making choices that are appropriate both to reality and to our own nature, we would not have to deal with questions like: By what values should I live my life? By what principles should I act? What should I seek and what should I avoid?

Psychologists are far from united in their views of how the self as a moral agent evolves, but there is fairly strong agreement that successful culmination of this process calls for the individual to behave in ways he or she judges to be moral not out of fear of punishment or social disapproval or out of blind, conformist rule following, but out of an authentic, firsthand assessment of the right and wrong involved. Here again, then, we confront the issue of autonomy and individuation. Imitative rule following represents a fairly early stage of a child's development, to be outgrown and transcended with subsequent knowledge and authority.

However, as long as we think for ourselves about moral matters, we can find ourselves in conflict with the teachings of significant others in our world. Our own judgment might tell us to be compassionate when conventional morality says to be stern, or to be indignant when conventional morality says to be humble, or to be proud when conventional morality says to be self-disparaging, or to be challenging when conventional morality says to be compliant, or to be self-assertive when conventional morality says to be self-sacrificial. We might find ourselves clashing with people important to us about issues such as abortion, sexual practices, differing ideas about rights and responsibilities, government regulation of our lives, or any matters that involve our values. Then the question becomes: Will we remain loyal to our judgment or will we surrender it in order to "belong?" Will we preserve our autonomy or betray it?

Most of us admire people who have the courage and integrity to remain loyal to honest, reasoned convictions in the face of opposition and animosity. At some level, we *know* that independence is our proper state, whether or not we fully achieve it. Only an authoritarian personality is likely to dispute that it is better to think moral issues through autonomously than to make decisions based on habitual conformity or fear. We may wish to check our reasoning against the reasoning of others, for objectivity, but to the extent that we function autonomously we know that ultimate responsibility for our choices and decisions is ours alone. Autonomy entails self-responsibility.

## Being Autonomous

Autonomy pertains to self-regulation: control and direction from within, rather than from any external authority.

Autonomy is expressed through an individual's capacity for independent survival (supporting and maintaining one's existence through productive work), independent thinking (looking at the world through one's own eyes), and independent judgment (honoring inner signals and values).

Autonomy should not be interpreted as self-sufficiency in the absolute sense. It does not mean that one lives on a desert island or should act as if one did. Nor should our focus on autonomy, independence, and individuation be construed as denial of the obvious fact that we constantly learn from others and clearly benefit from interactions with them. As I said at the outset, we are social beings. We speak a common language and influence and affect each other in countless ways. We need each other's participation to fulfill most of our goals. That we live in a social context is *assumed* in this discussion.

And yet consciousness by its nature is immutably private. We are each of us, in the last analysis, islands of consciousness. To be alive is to be an individual, and to be an individual who is conscious is to experience a unique perspective on the world. To be an individual who is not only conscious but self-conscious is to encounter, if only for brief moments in the privacy of one's own mind, the fact of our ultimate aloneness. No one can think for us, no one can feel for us, no one can live our life for us, and no one can give meaning to our existence except ourselves.

There are a thousand respects in which we are not alone. As human beings, we are linked to all other members of the human community. As living beings, we are linked to all other forms of life. As inhabitants of the universe, we are linked to everything that exists. We stand within an endless network of relationships. We are all parts of one universe. But within that universe, we are each of us a single point of consciousness, a unique event, a private, unrepeatable world.

It is precisely this fact that gives love its power and intensity, that allows merging to turn into ecstasy. However, no one is ready for love in the adult sense who has not made peace with the fact of his or her aloneness and accepted responsibility for his or her existence. Romantic love is for grown-ups.

More than one client in therapy has said to me, "One of the things that makes self-responsibility difficult is that it makes me feel so *alone*. It's frightening."

I typically reply, “You mean, it’s frightening to accept that no one is coming. No one is coming to rescue you. No one is coming to spare you the necessity of thought and effort. It’s hard sometimes really to let this in and absorb it. I do see that it’s hard for you. And yet, you know, it’s true: No one is coming. What are your ideas on how you might deal with this problem?”

Although we do not reflect on it consciously, when we exercise an independent process of thought or judgment, we implicitly connect with our aloneness. Thinking is not a social activity. When we recognize that we are the author of our choices and actions we experience our separateness. When we take the responsibility for our life and well-being proper to an adult human being, we underscore our individuation. To a self-confident mind this process is as natural and untroublesome as breathing. But if we have not grown to proper human adulthood, if we lack confidence in our competence and worth, this process may feel formidable and alarming and may become one of the reasons we dread self-responsibility. Then the challenge is to confront our fears and take whatever steps are necessary to graduate from childhood.

Otherwise, instead of feeling efficacious in the face of life’s challenges, we are doomed to feel powerless.

### **Efficacy**

“Efficacy” is the ability to produce a desired result. To be efficacious in the fundamental sense is to be able to cope with the challenges of life. We all desire—and need—this sense of competence. It is one of the core aspects of self-esteem.

Everyone has seen the delight of an infant banging a spoon against a table and producing a loud sound: The infant is affirming and reaffirming that he or she *can make something happen*. This is an experience of personal power, personal efficacy, and it is in our nature that, because of its obvious survival value, we will greet this experience with joy. At any age, when we feel efficacious we tend to feel that we are good and that life is good instead of feeling that we are helplessly ineffectual reactors in a malevolent universe.

We are born into a condition of total helplessness. Without the aid of others, we cannot feed or dress ourselves or even move across the room. Without caretakers we cannot survive. But from the beginning the direction of our learning and growth is normally toward independence and efficacy. As we develop, we learn to move by our own effort, to put food into our own mouth, to communicate with others through language, to select the clothes we will wear today, to walk to school on our own, to read, to master arithmetic and later mathematics, to drive an



automobile, to understand increasingly complex subjects such as physics and literature, to move into our own apartment, to form a philosophy of life, to enter into contracts with other people, to engage in productive work—in brief, to become self-supporting and self-responsible. The track of individuation is also the track of increasing competence or increasing efficacy. Looking back over our life, any of us can see the many ways growth equates higher stages of mastery, and the intimate relationship between efficacy and becoming more fully our own person.

In the nineteen-thirties an idea about child-rearing gained wide currency but had unfortunate results for the children of parents who accepted it. This was the belief that children should be picked up, hugged, fed, and otherwise cared for according to a schedule entirely determined by adults. It was taught that children should not be attended to merely because they cried or shouted or waved their arms. Apart from seeing that the child was not in pain, parents were advised to ignore such signals, so children would not be “spoilt.” Later it was observed that children raised in this manner tended to lack social competence; they tended not to interact well with other children or with adults; they were often passive socially. They had not learned that through their own actions they could produce a desired effect on other human beings. They did not experience themselves as the cause of any parental behavior. They did not have an opportunity to experience this form of efficacy. Consequently, as they grew, they faced other human beings without the confidence that comes from experiencing some sense of power. To develop appropriately, then, we need the experience of having wants and learning what actions we can take to satisfy them.

A child wants to move across the room and acquires the skill to do so. A child wants to communicate thoughts and feelings and acquires the necessary language skills. A child wants to ride a bicycle and learns how to do it. A child’s *wants* constitute one of the most important driving forces of growth. We are pulled along the path of our development not only by the maturation of body and brain but also by the values that energize us—*that we take responsibility for achieving*.

A therapy client once wondered aloud why he had not become more independent as an adult. I asked if he had ever made independence a goal or purpose and he had answered no. Perhaps that explained it, I suggested.

If efficacy pertains to our ability to satisfy our needs and achieve our goals, then clearly it is a necessity of well-being. What I want to stress is that individuation is inseparable from the growth of efficacy—that is, from learning how to think, acquire skills, master challenges, cope with new and unfamiliar situations, and extend the range of competence. What we are able to do is intrinsic to

the experience of who we are. Through learning, I continue the process of creating myself— not just in childhood but across a lifetime.

### **Self-Responsibility**

As we grow in efficacy, as we become more competent to cope with the challenges of life, we find self-responsibility easier and more natural to practice. And as we practice self-responsibility, we grow in efficacy. The relationship is reciprocal.

Thinking about self-responsibility, I am reminded of an old joke. A wealthy lady exits from a stretch limousine and then her young son, who looks to be about ten, is borne out on a pillow carried by four servants. A bystander says to the woman, “Oh, madam, your poor son! Can’t he walk?” And the woman answers haughtily, “Of course he can walk. But thank God he doesn’t have to.”

In real life, no one is entirely lacking in self-responsibility. If we did not initiate some actions on our own behalf, we could not exist. Even the most passive and dependent of us is self-responsible in some areas some of the time. That is, we all accept the task of being the cause of some desired effects.

One of the natural pleasures of childhood is the discovery “I can do it!” When accomplishments are treated by adults not as duties but as signs of growth and maturation, children can be heard exclaiming proudly, “I can tie my shoes!” “I can help clear the table!” “I’ll get the rake, Daddy!” “I can recite the whole alphabet!” “I can read that sign!” “I can make my own lunch!” In these examples we can see how closely self-responsibility and efficacy are related. It is as if, at the start of life, nature gives us a push in the right direction by linking these experiences with enjoyment, satisfaction, and pride. But we do not continue moving in that direction effortlessly or automatically.

If, as children grow, all choices and decision are made for them by adults, if no expectations are held up to them and no responsibilities required, the danger is that they will remain dependent, inadequately individuated, underdeveloped in competencies appropriate to their age, and of course not self-responsible. If too much is expected of children too soon, if they are burdened by demands beyond their capacity, the danger is that they will sink into passivity and feelings of defeat and congenital incompetence and, again, will not properly individuate or learn self-responsibility.

If parents understand that by the design of our natures we are intended to evolve toward autonomy, and if they choose to support and align themselves with this process, then they will want to be sensitive to opportunities for nurtur-

ing competence and self-responsibility. They will seek to elicit not obedience but cooperation. They will look for ways to stimulate thinking. They will teach their children to appreciate causal connections between actions and consequences. They will create an environment of safety, respect, acceptance, and trust, in which a healthy self can grow. They will look for opportunities to offer their children age-appropriate choices and responsibilities and thus teach accountability. They will assign tasks that allow the child to make some contribution to the running of the household, such as clearing the table, emptying the garbage, or cutting the lawn, so that the child gains experience in feeling effective as a family member. They will teach (and model) the virtue of perseverance. They will celebrate achievements. They will honor signs of self-responsibility. They will communicate their belief in the child's abilities and worth.

### **The Meaning of Maturity**

There is in almost everyone some implicit awareness of the fact that the natural expression of proper adulthood is self-responsibility. One of the ways this is evidenced is our tendency to describe certain behavior as "childish."

For example, if a couple has had a conflict and each is sulking and waiting passively for the other to do something, we say that their behavior is childish because they are avoiding taking any responsibility for achieving a resolution. If a woman continues to let her mother make all her important decisions, even though the woman is now in her twenties, we say that "she's still a child" because she takes so little responsibility for her life. If a man refuses to be accountable for his actions and is always engaged in blaming or using alibis, we say, "He's never grown up"—because one of the traits we identify with adulthood is willingness to be responsible for what one does. If a woman blindly and trustingly turns over the management of her inherited money to a stranger about whom she knows nothing, and the money vanishes, and the woman wails, "Why me?" we say, "She acted like a five-year-old," because we expect an adult to be more responsible about her choices. If we see that a man is afraid to offer an opinion about any subject without first knowing what his authority figures believe, we consider this as evidence of immaturity, because we identify maturity with some measure of independent thinking and thus self-responsibility. If we see a woman dominated by a hunger for compliments and attention, yet unable to carry her own weight in any relationship, unable to give any of the values she expects from others, we say, "She's as self-absorbed as an infant," because for infants dependence and neediness are a natural state. Or, to offer a different kind of example, if we say that paternalistic governments "infantilize" people, we mean that such governments undermine and penalize self-responsibility and reward the opposite. The point is, we do not associate self-responsibility with two-year-olds; we associate it with grown-ups.

## Questions

Many factors contribute to the course of our development. One is our biological inheritance. Another may be the birth experience itself. Another is the nature of our interactions with other human beings as we are growing up. Another factor—and the one most often ignored—is *the creative role that we ourselves play*.

We are not merely passive clay on which biology, external events, and other people write. No attempt to explain an individual by reference only to biological and environmental elements has ever succeeded: There is always the unpredictable, mysterious contribution of the person involved. We are active contestants in the drama of our lives. We have choices, and our choices matter. This is a central theme in my previous book, *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*.

In Chapter 2 we will examine the issue of choice and responsibility in more detail, but it can hardly be denied that if we *expect* ourselves to operate self-responsibly, and if others expect it of us, we are more likely to do so than if it isn't expected. If our personal philosophy *values* autonomy, and if the culture does also, we are more likely to evolve toward it than if conformity is prized instead. If we *want* to grow up, and if our social milieu respects rather than scorns such “adult” values as productive work, a capacity for deferred gratification, and the ability to think and plan long-range, then the chances are that we will attain some measure of maturity. Otherwise, chances are that we will march toward old age without ever graduating from childhood or adolescence. The point, simply, is that self-responsibility, autonomy, and maturity are most likely to be attained when they are adopted as *values* and chosen as *goals*.

Our values and goals provide the motive power and the direction for our development. We shape our identity and advance our efficacy *through what we are willing to take responsibility for*.

Although we have spelled out the meaning of self-responsibility in a general way, when we reflect on it we see that the idea requires some unpacking. For example, if I say I take responsibility for my actions, what exactly do I mean? If I say I take responsibility for my choices and decisions, what is it I want you to understand? If I say I take responsibility for the level of consciousness I bring to my activities, or for my choice of companions, or for the way I deal with people, or for the values I live by, or for the level of my self-esteem, or for the way I treat my body, or for my spiritual development, what do such declarations *mean*? Am I saying that I claim absolutely no control over my life? Or that I deny the reality of external influences? Or that I am never affected by factors beyond my control? Or that for all practical purposes I operate in a vacuum and that other people are not

essential to my fulfillment? These are all questions we will need to consider.

There is no question that self-responsibility and the ability to make choices are intimately related. The concept of self-responsibility presupposes free will. In contrast, apostles of non-responsibility deny any form of psychological freedom and assert that our beliefs, actions, and values are all determined by factors outside our control, by our biology and “conditioning” What is involved in this conflict?

\* \* \*

From Nathaniel Branden, *Taking Responsibility* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

# *No Greater Love*

Mother Teresa

(New World Library, 1997)

## **On Prayer**

I don't think there is anyone who needs God's help and grace as much as I do. Sometimes I am so helpless and weak. I think that is why God uses me. Because I cannot depend on my own strength, I rely on Him twenty-four hours a day. If the day had even more hours, then I would need His help and grace during those hours as well. All of us must cling to God through prayer.

My secret is very simple: I pray. Through prayer I become one in love with Christ. I realize that praying to Him is loving Him.

In reality, there is only one true prayer, only one substantial prayer: Christ Himself. There is only one voice that rises above the face of the earth: the voice of Christ. Perfect prayer does not consist in many words, but in the fervor of the desire which raises the heart to Jesus.

Love to pray. Feel the need to pray often during the day. Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God's gift of Himself. Ask and seek and your heart will grow big enough to receive Him and keep Him as your own.

We want so much to pray properly and then we fail. We get discouraged and give up. If you want to pray better, you must pray more. God allows the failure but He does not want the discouragement. He wants us to be more childlike, more humble, more grateful in prayer, to remember we all belong to the mystical body of Christ, which is praying always.

We need to help each other in our prayers. Let us free our minds. Let's not pray long, drawn-out prayers, but let's pray short ones full of love. Let us pray on behalf of those who do not pray. Let us remember, if we want to be able to love, we must be able to pray!

Prayer that comes from the mind and heart is called mental prayer. We must never forget that we are bound toward perfection and should aim ceaselessly at it. The practice of daily mental prayer is necessary to reach that goal. Because it is the breath of life to our soul, holiness is impossible without it.

It is only by mental prayer and spiritual reading that we can cultivate the gift of prayer. Mental prayer is greatly fostered by simplicity—that is, forgetfulness of self by transcendence of the body and of our senses, and by frequent aspirations

that feed our prayer. “In mental prayer,” says Saint John Vianney, “shut your eyes, shut your mouth, and open your heart.” In vocal prayer we speak to God; in mental prayer He speaks to us. It is then that God pours Himself into us.

Our prayers should be burning words coming forth from the furnace of hearts filled with love. In your prayers, speak to God with great reverence and confidence. Do not drag behind or run ahead; do not shout or keep silent, but devoutly, with great sweetness, with natural simplicity, without any affectation, offer your praise to God with the whole of your heart and soul.

Just once, let the love of God take entire and absolute possession of your heart; let it become to your heart like a second nature; let your heart suffer nothing contrary to enter; let it apply itself continually to increase this love of God by seeking to please Him in all things and refusing Him nothing; let it accept as from His hand everything that happens to it; let it have a firm determination never to commit any fault deliberately and knowingly or, if it should fall, to be humbled and to rise up again at once—and such a heart will pray continually.

People are hungry for the Word of God that will give peace, that will give unity, that will give joy. But you cannot give what you don't have. That's why it is necessary to deepen your life of prayer.

Be sincere in your prayers. Sincerity is humility, and you acquire humility only by accepting humiliations. All that has been said about humility is not enough to teach you humility. All that you have read about humility is not enough to teach you humility. You learn humility only by accepting humiliations. And you will meet humiliation all through your life. The greatest humiliation is to know that you are nothing. This you come to know when you face God in prayer.

Often a deep and fervent look at Christ is the best prayer: I look at Him and He looks at me. When you come face to face with God, you cannot but know that you are nothing, that you have nothing.

\* \* \*

It is difficult to pray if you don't know how to pray, but we must help ourselves to pray. The first means to use is silence. We cannot put ourselves directly in the presence of God if we do not practice internal and external silence.

The interior silence is very difficult, but we must make the effort. In silence we will find energy and true unity. The energy of God will be ours to do all things well, and so will the unity of our thoughts. With His thoughts, the unity of our

prayers with His prayers, the unity of our actions with His actions, of our life with His life. Unity is the fruit of prayer, of humility, of love.

In the silence of the heart God speaks. If you face God in prayer and silence, God will speak to you. Then you will know that you are nothing. It is only when realize your nothingness, your emptiness, that God can fill you with Himself. Souls of prayer are souls of great silence.

Silence gives us a new outlook on everything. We need silence to be able to touch souls. The essential thing is not what we say but what God says to us and through us. In that silence, He will listen to us; there He will speak to our Soul, and there we will hear His voice.

Listen in silence, because if your heart is full of other things you cannot hear the voice of God. But when you have listened to the voice of God in the stillness of your heart, then your heart is filled with God. This will need much sacrifice, but if we really mean to pray and want to pray we must be ready to do it now. These are only the first steps toward prayer but if we never make the first step with a determination, we will not reach the last one: the presence of God.

This is what we have to learn right from the beginning; to listen to the voice of God in our heart, and then in the silence of the heart God speaks. Then from the fullness of our hearts, our mouth will have to speak. That is the connection. In the silence of the heart, God speaks and you have to listen. Then in the fullness of your heart, because it is full of God, full of love, full of compassion, full of faith, your mouth will speak.

Remember, before you speak, it is necessary to listen, and only then, from the fullness of your heart you speak and God listens.

The contemplatives and ascetics of all ages and religions have sought God in the silence and solitude of the desert, forest, and mountain. Jesus Himself spent forty days in the desert and the mountains, communing for long hours with the Father in the silence of the night.

We too are called to withdraw at certain intervals into deeper silence and aloneness with God, together as a community as well as personally. To be alone with Him, not with our books, thoughts, and memories but completely stripped of everything, to dwell lovingly in His presence—silent, expectant, and motionless.

We cannot find God in noise or agitation. Nature: trees, flowers, and grass grow in silence. The stars, the moon, and the sun move in silence.

What is essential is not what we say but what God tells us and what He tells others through us. In silence He listens to us; in silence He speaks to our souls. In silence we are granted the privilege of listening to His voice.



Silence of our eyes.

Silence of our ears.

Silence of our mouths.

Silence of our minds.

... in the silence of the heart

God will speak.

Silence of the heart is necessary so you can hear God everywhere—in the closing of the door, in the person who needs you, in the birds that sing, in the flowers, in the animals.

If we are careful of silence it will be easy to pray. There is so much talk, so much repetition, so much carrying on of tales in words and in writing. Our prayer life suffers so much because our hearts are not silent.

I shall keep the silence of my heart with greater care, so that in the silence of my heart I hear His words of comfort and from the fullness of my heart I comfort Jesus in the distressing disguise of the poor.

\* \* \*

Real prayer is union with God, a union as vital as that of the vine to the branch, which illustration Jesus gives us in the Gospel of John. We need prayer. We need that union to produce good fruit. The fruit is what we produce with our hands, whether it be food, clothing, money, or something else. All of this is the fruit of our oneness with God. We need a life of prayer, of poverty, and of sacrifice to do it with love.

Sacrifice and prayer complement each other. There is no prayer without sacrifice, and there is no sacrifice without prayer. Jesus' life was spent in intimate union with His Father as He passed through this world. We need to do the same. Let's walk by His side. We need to give Christ a chance to make use of us, to be His word and His work, to share His food and His clothing in the world today.

If we do not radiate the light of Christ around us, the sense of the darkness that prevails in the world will increase.

We are called to love the world. And God loved the world so much that He gave Jesus. Today He loves the world so much that He gives you and me to be His

love, His compassion, and His presence, through a life of prayer, of sacrifice, of surrender to God. The response that God asks of you is to be a contemplative.

If we take Jesus at His word, all of us are contemplatives in the heart of the world, for if we have faith, we are continually in His presence. By contemplation the soul draws directly from the heart of God the graces, which the active life must distribute. Our lives must be connected with the living Christ in us. If we do not live in the presence of God we cannot go on.

What is contemplation? To live the life of Jesus. This is what I understand. To love Jesus, to live His life in us, to live our life in His life. That's contemplation. We must have a clean heart to be able to see—no jealousy, anger, contention, and especially no uncharitableness. To me, contemplation is not to be locked in a dark place, but to allow Jesus to live his passion, His love, His humility in us, praying with us, being with us, and sanctifying through us.

Our contemplation is our life. It is not a matter of doing but being. It is the possession of our spirit by the Holy Spirit breathing into us the plenitude of God and sending us forth to the whole creation as His personal message of love.

We shall not waste our time in looking for extraordinary experiences in our life of contemplation but live by pure faith, ever watchful and ready for His coming by doing our day-to-day duties with extraordinary love and devotion.

Our life of contemplation simply put is to realize God's constant presence and His tender love for us in the least little things of life. To be constantly available to Him, loving Him with our whole heart, whole mind, whole soul, and whole strength, no matter in what form He may come to us. Does your mind and your heart go to Jesus as soon as you get up in the morning? This is prayer, that you turn your mind and heart to God.

Prayer is the very life of oneness, of being one with Christ. Therefore, prayer is as necessary as the air, as the blood in our body, as anything, to keep us alive to the grace of God. To pray generously is not enough; we must pray devoutly, with fervor and piety. We must pray perseveringly and with great love. If we don't pray, our presence will have no power, our words will have no power.

We need prayers in order to better carry out the work of God, and so that in every moment we may know how to be completely available to Him.

We should make every effort to walk in the presence of God, to see God in all the persons we meet, to live our prayer throughout the day.

Knowledge of the self puts us on our knees, and it is very necessary for love. For knowledge of God produces love, and knowledge of the self produces humility. Knowledge of the self is a very important thing in our lives. As Saint Augustine

says, “Fill yourselves first, and then only will you be able to give to others.”

Knowledge of the self is also a safeguard against pride, especially when you are tempted in life. The greatest mistake is to think you are too strong to fall into temptation. Put your finger in the fire and it will burn. So we have to go through the fire. The temptations are allowed by God. The only thing we have to do is to refuse to give in.

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## *Five Philosophies of Education*

	<b><i>Knowledge</i></b>	<b><i>Method</i></b>	<b><i>Individuation</i></b>	<b><i>Socialization</i></b>	<b><i>Morality</i></b>
<b><i>Basic theme</i></b>					
<b><i>View of teacher</i></b>	As expert in field	As expert in thinking and learning	As guide, as facilitator, as motivator, cheerleader	As group leader, discussion facilitator	As expert in morality
<b><i>View of student</i></b>	Student as vessel to be filled	Student as critical/ creative thinker-in-training	As initiator, as self-legislator	As member of a group	As amoral or immoral; as needing training
<b><i>Curriculum</i></b>	Factual lessons	Lessons in method: math, logic, scientific method, word problems	Individual projects. E.g., individual sports	Group projects. E.g., group sports	History, Literature; Moral lessons
<b><i>Test of success of education</i></b>	The child does well on factual tests	The child does well on information manipulation tests	The child displays uniqueness, independence, initiative, self esteem	The child gets along with the group, diplomacy and negotiating skills	The child behaves morally
<b><i>Philosophies that promote</i></b>					
<b><i>Quotation</i></b>					

## *Quotations on Education*

1. “You go to a great school not so much for knowledge as for arts and habits; for the habit of attention, for the art of expression, for the art of assuming at a moment’s notice a new intellectual position, for the art of entering quickly into another person’s thoughts, for the habit of submitting to censure and refutation, for the art of indicating assent or dissent in graduated terms.” (Quoted in Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*)
2. “Computers, by their very nature, encourage logical, abstract thinking, thereby limiting the child’s ability to respond creatively.” (Julia du Prey, *Kingston Whig-Standard*, 1996)
3. “I believe that education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of social consciousness is the only sure method of social reconstruction.” (John Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed*, Chicago: A. Flanagan Co., 1897, p. 16)
4. “Do we want to use our colleges to produce hundreds of busy little conceptualizers, explainers and verifiers, talkers and analysis-makers at a time when the conceptualizing and analytic mind has been running wild through the world, having detached itself from the simple human virtues of love, compassion, tenderness, and empathy which it is the task of any education in sensibility to foster?” (Harold Taylor, *Students without Teachers*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969, p. 156)
5. Mission statement: “The Central P.S. community will provide a secure and collaborative environment that enables individual students to reach their potential through creating a desire to learn, enhancing self-esteem and responding to individual learning styles.” (Central School, Guelph, Ontario, 2002)
6. “Education is not about self-esteem. Education is demeaning. It should be about teaching you what you don’t know, what you yet need to know, how much there is yet to do. Part of the process of education is teaching you that you are related to people who are not you, not your parents—that you are related to black runaway slaves and that you are related to suffragettes in the 19th century and that you are related to Puritans. That you are related to some continuous flow of ideas, some linkage, of which you are the beneficiary, the most recent link. The argument for bilingual education, or for teaching black children their own lingo, assumes that education is about self-esteem. My argument is that education is about teaching children to use the language of other people.” (From “The New, New World,” an interview with author Richard Rodriguez, *Reason*, August/ September 1994)

## *Quotations on Idealism and Education*

Plato: “If we are ever to have pure knowledge of anything we must get rid of the body and contemplate things by themselves with the soul by itself . . . no pure knowledge is possible in the company of the body . . . so long as we are alive, we shall continue closest to knowledge if we avoid as much as we can all contact and association with the body . . . and instead of allowing ourselves to become infected with its nature, purify ourselves from it until God himself gives us deliverance.” (*Phaedo* 66e)

Archimedes (c. 287–c. 212 BCE): “Yet Archimedes possessed so high a spirit, so profound a soul, and such treasures of scientific knowledge, that though these inventions had now obtained him the renown of more than human sagacity, he yet would not deign to leave behind him any commentary or writing on such subjects; but, repudiating as sordid and ignoble the whole trade of engineering, and every sort of art that lends itself to mere use and profit, he placed his whole affection and ambition in those purer speculations where there can be no reference to the vulgar needs of life; studies, the superiority of which to all others is unquestioned, and in which the only doubt can be, whether the beauty and grandeur of the subjects examined, or the precision and cogency of the methods and means of proof, most deserve our admiration.” (From “Marcellus.” Plutarch’s *Lives*, translated by John Dryden and edited by A.H. Clough, October, 1996, <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext96/plivs10.txt>)

St. Paul (c.5 BCE – c.67 CE): “I am physical, sold into slavery to sin. I do not understand what I am doing, for I do not do what I want to do; I do the things that I hate . . . What a wretched man I am! Who can save me from this doomed body?”

St. Augustine (354–430 CE): “Per molestias eruditio.” (“True education begins with physical abuse.”)

Mathematician G. H. Hardy (1877–1947): “I have never done anything ‘useful.’ No discovery of mine has made, or is likely to make, directly or indirectly, for good or ill, the least difference to the amenity of the world.” (*A Mathematician’s Apology*, 1940)

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# The Secret to Great Work is Great Play

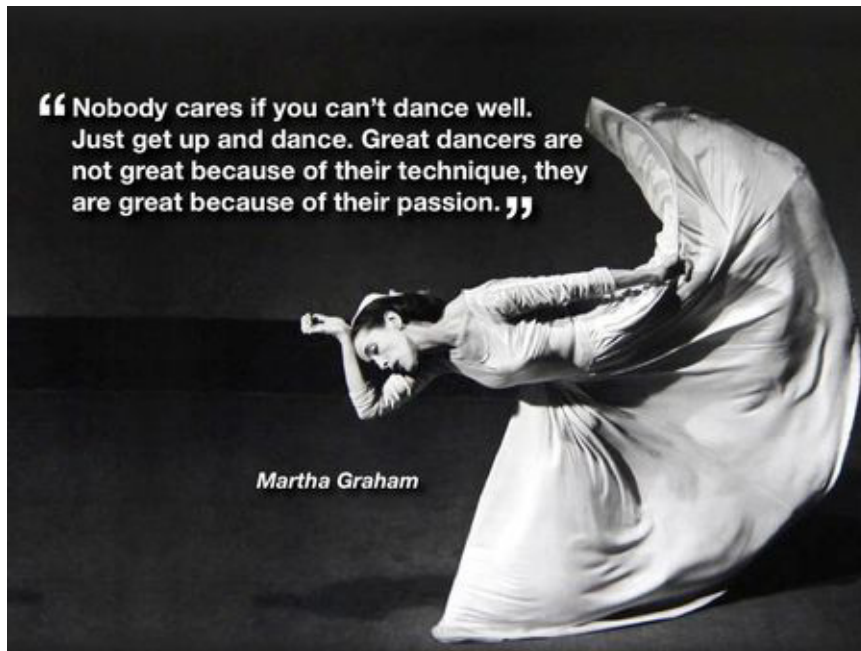
Garr Reynolds

From the Presentation Zen blog, March 26, 2010

We were born to play. Play is how we learn and develop our minds and our bodies, and it's also how we express ourselves. Play comes naturally to us. I was reminded of this while listening to a cool little jazz gig near the beach in Maui a couple of months ago. I snapped this photo below of a little girl enjoying the simple beauty of that musical moment by dancing happily all by herself.



I love this picture above because it shows both adults and a child at play. The adult musicians are expressing themselves through jazz, a complex form of play with rules and constraints but also great freedom, freedom that leads to tremendous creativity and enjoyment for the players and the listeners. The child did not know or care about the complexities of the chords and the rhythms or the wonderful interplay among the musicians, yet the energy and beauty of the music made her smile, then laugh, then dance. She did not care if her dance was “good enough” — she just danced because she was moved by the music. She danced with such exuberance and speed that she appears only as a blur in the photo above. Dance is perhaps the purest form of play. Children move to music long before they receive instruction on “how to dance.” We are born to move and we are born to play. Children remind us of this. They remind us that we are *passionate* beings.



Original photo of Martha Graham by Barbara Morgan.

### **Play keeps us in the moment**

A spirit of play engages us and brings us into the content and into the moment. Children remind us that we need more play in the classroom, in the lecture hall, and especially in the typical conference presentation. But first we adults must give up the notion that play is not serious. We must abandon the notion that work (or study) and play are opposites. Work and play are inexorably linked, at least the kind of creative work in which we are engaged today and hope to prepare our children for. As Bill Buxton likes to say, “These things are far too important to take seriously. We need to be able to play.”

### **The opposite of play (and work) is depression**

In this TED talk below [[http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/stuart\\_brown\\_says\\_play\\_is\\_more\\_than\\_fun\\_it\\_s\\_vital.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/stuart_brown_says_play_is_more_than_fun_it_s_vital.html)], Dr. Stuart Brown reminds us that “The opposite of play is not work, it’s depression.” Brown makes many good points concerning the importance of play, not just for children but for all of us. Ironically, the presentation could have been even better if Dr. Brown had interjected more play into the actual talk (like Tim Brown did in his talk on play and creativity), but still the talk is very much worth watching for the issues raised.



## **A spirit of play connects**

Play creates a relaxed feeling of connection between presenter and audience and among the audience members themselves. Play fosters a collective experience of engagement with the content. In this example below [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ne6tB2KiZuk>], the legendary Bobby McFerrin illustrates the power of the pentatonic scale (and expectations, etc.) not by sitting and talking about it, but by standing up and getting the audience involved. Watch it.

## **It starts with not taking yourself so &^%\$#@! seriously**

Our topic may be very serious indeed. Regardless of the topic, we should take the needs of the audience and the material quite seriously. However, good things happen when we stop taking ourselves so seriously. It's OK to have fun, it's OK to enjoy the experience and to expose some of your true self without the doubt and worry about what other people will think. What would happen if you removed the fear? This rare video clip below [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKTSaezB4p8>] by one of my heroes, the brilliant (and quite humble) physicist Richard Feynman, is a wonderful example of play. If a "serious person" like a respected Nobel-prize winning scientist can go nuts on the bongos, why can't you and I let go of our egos just a little bit and have some fun too?

Bringing a spirit of play to work — and the feeling of exploration and discovery that it instills in the moment — improves learning and stimulates creative thinking. But often it's good to play for no other reason than to have great fun and feel good and recharged (as Dr. Feynman demonstrated). We can find inspiration in play itself, and we are inspired by those teachers and managers who understand that play is too important not to bring to work.

<http://www.presentationzen.com/presentationzen/2010/03/we-were-born-to-play-play-is-how-we-learn-and-develop-our-minds-and-our-bodies-and-its-also-how-we-express-ourselves-play.html>

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# Want Passionate Kids? Leave 'em Alone

By Michael Torrice

*LiveScience*, February 9, 2010

Parents who want their children to discover a passion for music, sports, or other hobbies should follow a simple plan: Don't pressure them.

By allowing kids to explore activities on their own, parents not only help children pinpoint the pursuit that fits them best, but they can also prevent young minds from obsessing over an activity, a new study finds.

"Passion comes from a special fit between an activity and a person," said Geneviève Mageau, a psychology professor at the University of Montreal. "You can't force that fit; it has to be found."

The study focused on what psychologists call autonomy, the basic need to feel like you're acting based on your own values and desires, not those of others. Controlling parents chip away at their child's autonomy, by pushing them into a hobby, the researchers say. So when the kid picks up his clarinet it's not out of a desire to play music, but due to a sense of obligation or a fear of disappointing his parents, according to Mageau.

To connect passion to autonomy, Mageau and colleagues performed three studies in which they surveyed hundreds of athletes and musicians ages 6 to 38 with different skill levels.

The surveys asked questions about the subjects' level of passion, such as how often they practiced a hobby or how much they loved it. The psychologists then measured how much volunteers agreed with statements such as, "I have a tough time controlling my need to do this activity" to determine if their passion was obsessive and interfering with other aspects of their lives. To measure autonomy, the researchers also asked participants whether they agreed with statements such as, "I have a say in what happens and can voice my opinions regarding my activity."

In one study, the researchers followed 196 middle-school students as they picked up a musical instrument for the first time. After five months, the psychologists found that one major variable that predicted whether children developed a passion for music was if their parents allowed them the freedom to practice on their own schedule. The passionate kids on average scored 9 percent greater on the autonomy scale than the non-passionate kids, which is a big effect in a psychology study, Mageau said.

The two other studies also showed that children who had little autonomy but did develop a passion for an activity were more likely than others to take it too far, becoming obsessed with the hobby.

Not only could these children miss out on truly enjoying their hobby, the result could grate on their self-esteem, according to the researchers. Obsessively passionate people attach their self-esteem to the pastime: If they play the clarinet flawlessly one night, they feel great, but if they miss a note, they can get depressed.

One of the three studies involved swimmers, skiers and musicians performing at a national level. Results showed that the participants' level of autonomy best predicted if they had an obsessive passion compared to a harmonious one, with higher autonomy linked with harmonious passions. This freedom mattered more than the child's own desire to specialize in their hobby.

The difference between forming a healthy and an unhealthy passion is to strike a balance between, say, the clarinet and hanging out with friends. "They don't see [the activity] as defining their whole self," Mageau said. "It's a big part of who they are, but they have other interests too."

But the study's results don't mean parents should let their kids run wild.

"I'm not telling parents to let their kids do whatever they want without limits," Mageau said. "The most important message is to focus on the child's interests and not to impose one's own on them."

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<http://www.livescience.com/culture/children-passions-autonomy-100209.html>

# A Is for App: How Smartphones, Handheld Computers Sparked an Educational Revolution

By Anya Kamenetz

*Fast Company Magazine, April 1, 2010*

As smartphones and handheld computers move into classrooms worldwide, we may be witnessing the start of an educational revolution. How technology could unleash childhood creativity — and transform the role of the teacher.

Gemma and Eliana Singer are big iPhone fans. They love to explore the latest games, flip through photos, and watch YouTube videos while waiting at a restaurant, having their hair done, or between ballet and French lessons. But the Manhattan twins don't yet have their own phones, which is good, since they probably wouldn't be able to manage the monthly data plan: In November, they turned 3.

When the Singer sisters were just 6 months old, they already preferred cell phones to almost any other toy, recalls their mom, Fiona Aboud Singer: "They loved to push the buttons and see it light up." The girls knew most of the alphabet by 18 months and are now starting to read, partly thanks to an iPhone app called First Words, which lets them move tiles along the screen to spell c-o-w and d-o-g. They sing along with the Old MacDonald app too, where they can move a bug-eyed cartoon sheep or rooster inside a corral, and they borrow Mom's tablet computer and photo-editing software for a 21st-century version of finger painting. "They just don't have that barrier that technology is hard or that they can't figure it out," Singer says.

Gemma and Eliana belong to a generation that has never known a world without ubiquitous handheld and networked technology. American children now spend 7.5 hours a day absorbing and creating media — as much time as they spend in school. Even more remarkably, they multitask across screens to cram 11 hours of content into those 7.5 hours. More and more of these activities are happening on smartphones equipped with audio, video, SMS, and hundreds of thousands of apps.

The new connectedness isn't just for the rich. Mobile adoption is happening faster worldwide than that of color TV a half-century ago. Mobile-phone subscribers are

expected to hit 5 billion during 2010; more than 2 billion of those live in developing countries, with the fastest growth in Africa. Mobile broadband is forecast to top access from desktop computers within five years.

As with television, many people are wondering about the new technology's effect on children. "The TV set was pretty much a damned medium back in the '60s," says Gary Knell, CEO of Sesame Workshop. But where others railed against the "vast wasteland," *Sesame Street* founders Joan Ganz Cooney and Lloyd Morrisett saw a new kind of teacher. "They said, Why don't we use it to teach kids letters and numbers and get them ready for school?" *Sesame Street*, from its 1969 debut, changed the prevailing mind-set about a new technology's potential. With its diverse cast and stoop-side urban setting, the show was aimed especially at giving poor kids a head start on education.

Today, handheld and networked devices are at the same turning point, with an important difference: They are tools for expression and connection, not just passive absorption. "You put a kid in front of a TV, they veg out," says Andrew Shalit, creator of the First Words app and father of a toddler son. "With an iPhone app, the opposite is true. They're figuring out puzzles, moving things around using fine motor skills. What we try to do with the game is create a very simple universe with simple rules that kids can explore."

For children born in the past decade, the transformative potential of these new universes is just beginning to be felt. New studies and pilot projects show smartphones can actually make kids smarter. And as the search intensifies for technological solutions to the nation's and the world's education woes — "Breakthrough Learning in a Digital Age," as the title of a summit at Google HQ last fall had it — growing sums of money are flowing into the sector. The U.S. Department of Education has earmarked \$5 billion in competitive school-reform grants to scale up pilot programs and evaluate best practices of all kinds. Major foundations are specifically zeroing in on handhelds for preschool and the primary grades. "Young kids and multisensor-touch computing are a huge area of innovation," says Phoenix Wang, the head of a startup philanthropic venture fund called Startl — funded by the Gates, MacArthur, and Hewlett foundations — that's entirely focused on educational investing. Google, Nokia, Palm, and Sony have all supplied handheld devices for teaching. Thousands of new mobiles — not just smartphones but also ever-shrinking computers — have come into use at schools in the United States and around the world just in the past year.

To understand the transformative potential — and possible pitfalls — of this device-driven instructional reboot, you can look at the impact of one machine, the TeacherMate, that is getting educational futurists excited. It has the total package

of appropriate design, quality software, and an ability to connect kids with teachers and technologists. And while it will have to leap huge hurdles — systemic, bureaucratic, cultural — to be widely adopted, it does present the tantalizing prospect of revolutionizing how children are educated by drawing on their innate hunger to seize learning with both hands and push all the right buttons.

When I walk into the first-grade classroom at Henry Clay Elementary School on Chicago's South Side, the lights are off and the room is silent. Three-quarters of the 20 children are plugged into headphones, staring into little blue machines. The TeacherMate, as it is called, is a handheld computer with a four-hour battery life. It runs full-color Flash games on a platform partly open to volunteer developers worldwide, and it can record and play back audio. Julissa Muñoz shyly tells me that she likes this device better than her PlayStation 2 at home. "They have lots of games," she says. "I like the fireman game," where exciting music plays as you choose the right length ladder, which sneakily teaches simple addition and subtraction.

Julissa's teacher, the delightfully named Kelly Flowers, explains that the software on her laptop lets her track each student's performance. Once a week, when she plugs each student's TeacherMate into her docking station, she downloads a record of their game play and generates reports for herself as well as for parents. Then she sets the precise skills, levels, and allotted time for the upcoming week. The programs are synced with the reading and math curricula used in the school — right down to the same spelling words each week.

Most important, says Flowers, the TeacherMate works. She privately sorts her kids into three groups based on their reading skills — green (scoring at or above grade level), yellow (borderline), and red (underperformers). "This year, with TeacherMate, I started with 11 greens, 2 yellows, and 7 reds. By the middle of the year, I had just 2 reds. I can move a red to a yellow on my own, but this is my first year moving a red directly to a green. I've never seen that much growth in that short a time." Flowers's observations are backed up by preliminary University of Illinois research that suggests that reading and math scores in classrooms with TeacherMates are significantly higher than in those without.

Flowers says the kids like the TeacherMate because it gives them a feeling of freedom. "It doesn't feel like homework," she says. "They can choose from a whole list of games. They don't know that I decided what [skills] they'd be working on." And during the time her class spends with TeacherMates each day, Flowers can devote more focused time and attention to small groups of students.

TeacherMate is the brainchild of a bearded technology lawyer turned social en-

trepreneur from Evanston, Illinois, named Seth Weinberger, who punctuates his verbal volleys with waving hands and liberal profanity. He says he's on year 15 of a 30-year personal life plan to transform schooling in America using technology.

When Weinberger's daughter and son, now college-age, were toddlers, he and his wife helped start a preschool. "I donated some computers and was going to donate some reading software," he says. "I went to Best Buy in 1993 and I couldn't see how any of the stuff they had could teach a kid anything." At his law firm, Weinberger happened to have some video-game designers as clients; he asked them to create a game-based reading program. It was a hit. "The school loves it, I love it. To me, this is the future of education. I go back to the clients and say, 'This is a great beginning!' They say, 'No, this is the great ending. There's no market for educational software.'" "

Weinberger disagreed, and decided to teach himself how to program. He would work from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the law firm, go home, and work from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. at his computer — his obsession with education making him a near-absentee dad to his own kids. Eventually, he licensed the software, which allowed him to "hire real developers who rewrote everything, laughing hysterically," he says.

For the next 12 years, Weinberger continued to develop K-2 level reading and math software through his not-for-profit, Innovations for Learning, coordinating the work of programmers in India and Argentina with teachers at a dozen schools in Chicago. Three years ago, Weinberger and his team realized handheld mobile devices had gotten sophisticated enough to be ideal for classroom use. They were cheaper and more durable than laptops, and teachers found their smaller size proved less distracting in class. Moreover, he says, kids seemed to intuitively understand how to use the simpler machines. "We encourage teachers not to do any pretraining," he says. "Pass them out, turn them on, and have the kid start."

Existing PDAs such as the PalmPilot and Dell Axim, on initial testing, proved a little too delicate and expensive for classroom use. So Innovations for Learning worked with a Chinese company to cheaply design and develop the TeacherMate, which debuted in 2008. Currently, it sells for \$100, bundled with games customized to match each of the major K-2 reading and math curricula.

The name was chosen carefully: Weinberger says he has realized that educational innovation is useless if the teachers don't find it helpful — it can't be a distraction, an additional burden on their time, or a threat to their authority. Innovations for Learning is partnering with Chicago's Academy for Urban School Leadership, a not-for-profit that focuses on professional development, emphasizing that helping teachers learn to work with TeacherMate is their priority. With the backing of

the JPMorgan Chase Foundation and Arne Duncan, then the superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools and now the secretary of education, IFL took the TeacherMate from its longtime cluster of 12 Chicago schools to 500 schools in 14 states as of the fall of 2009.

Weinberger can't stop talking about the TeacherMate's untapped possibilities. It seemingly has a solution for every educational buzzword out there: differentiated instruction, English-language learners, class size. It can let a Spanish-speaking parent help a student with his homework in English. (In addition to Spanish, software is being developed in Arabic, Hebrew, and Tagalog, with a goal to get to 100 languages.) It can help a teacher track exactly how much reading is going on at home. And it can allow a math whiz to speed ahead several grade levels.

While the TeacherMate doesn't yet sport wireless connectivity, that should be coming within the next year or two. Weinberger envisions porting the software to the iPod Touch and iPad and then a next-generation of more-sophisticated machines running Android, Google's open-source operating system. Content could expand to include science-experiment demos and immersive historical environments for social studies.

For longtime school reformers, the sales pitch for the TeacherMate may sound familiar. When it comes to our nation's public schools, the Miracle Man's wagon pulls into town every week with some magical intervention or other. What feels different about Innovations for Learning is that it isn't wedded to any particular gadget. While his organization has put significant resources into developing the TeacherMate, Weinberger says his true investment is in the concept. What matters is the development of new teaching and learning practices built around an idea: affordable, portable machines paired with constantly updated, collaboratively designed, open-platform software. "It's about the system," he says, "not a device."

At the same time, even as he's careful to note that the TeacherMate is just one stage in an ongoing, deliberate process, Weinberger can't restrain a tone of geek-like glee at what his team has produced — a convergence of compelling features, a reasonably affordable price, and demonstrated results — which is winning converts under its own momentum. "There's no stopping it," he says. "These devices are just too freaking good."

Late on Thanksgiving night, I'm in a van bumping over gravel roads in Baja California, Mexico, with Paul Kim, the chief technology officer of Stanford University's School of Education; a field team of four students; and two boxes of TeacherMates. Stray dogs prowl in front of roadside taquerias, their eyes glowing red in our passing headlights. Noah Freedman, a 19-year-old Princeton sophomore, is



on his laptop in the front seat doing some last-minute debugging of an interactive storytelling program, while Ricardo Flores, a Stanford master's student, translates the software's directions into Spanish — giving a new meaning, Freedman jokes, to “mobile development.”

We spend the next two days meeting with Mixtec and Zapotec children at campos, farm workers' camps with rows of corrugated-steel-roofed barracks set on packed mud. We roll into the compounds in the back of a truck driven by a local missionary and hand out bags of rice and beans to the mothers, who tell me that the youth here — clad in the international uniform of hoodies, jeans, and sneakers — are struggling with borderlands issues of drugs and violence on top of rural poverty and isolation. And though schools here are supposed to run in half-day sessions, we find schoolhouses empty and locked both morning and afternoon.

Kim is devoted to using cell phones to provide poor children with the basics of education and with access to all of the world's information. “Kids love stories,” he says. “In places with no TV, no Internet, no books, when they are given these devices, these are like gifts from heaven.” He has long dreamed of a machine that is cheap, powered with a solar or bicycle charger, and equipped with game-based learning content — a complete “Pocket School.” For the past four years, he has been testing phones from a dozen different manufacturers, but the TeacherMate, which he discovered in March 2008, comes closer than anything to the Pocket School ideal.

The Mexico trip is one of a whirlwind of small user-testing and demonstration projects that Kim has undertaken in the past 12 months. He has personally brought TeacherMates to Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, India, South Korea, Costa Rica, the Philippines, Palestine, and several sites in Mexico, in most cases working with local not-for-profits, trying them out for a few hours and on a few dozen children at a time. He brings along programmers, like Freedman, so they can get feedback and tweak the software accordingly. In South Korea, Mexico, and the Philippines, schools and community centers continue to use the devices and collect data.

Kim's TeacherMate strategy, like Weinberger's, is to let the kids figure it out by themselves. In Baja, I watch children aged 6 to 12 pick the machine up and within a few minutes, with no direct instructions, they're working in groups of three, helping one another figure out the menus in English by trial and error, playing the same math games as the students in Chicago, and reading along with stories in Spanish. The children agree that the TeacherMates are *bonitas* — “cute.” An 11-year-old named Silvia asks me hopefully, “*Son regalos?*” (“Are these gifts?”) I have to say that they are only for borrowing. The missionary, Pablo Ohm, will

keep the TeacherMates at the community center he runs in the town of Camalu, but access won't be regular.

One of Kim's inspirations was George Washington Carver, who brought a "movable school" — a horse-drawn wagon full of agricultural exhibits — to poor black communities in rural Alabama in the 1920s. Kim is targeting especially the kids whose circumstances make it impossible to attend school regularly: refugees, migrants, the homeless. "Unesco reports that there are 150 million street children and another 250 million who will never see a book," he says. "Donating books is great, but think about it. When you mail a book from here to Rwanda, the shipping will cost you way more than the cost of the book, and maybe nobody there can read the book."

Whereas Weinberger wants to improve teaching practices at existing schools, Kim focuses overwhelmingly on empowering kids to teach themselves. He sees technology as a liberating force, helping kids in rich and poor countries alike bypass schools, with all their waste, bureaucracy, and failures, entirely. "Why does education need to be so structured? What are we so afraid of?" he asks. "The more you expect from a kid, the smarter they're going to get."

Kim is drawing on his own painful experience with formal education. In postwar South Korea, Kim found school a conformist "assembly line." As a "bottom 2%" performer, he was beaten regularly for major and minor infractions. "Other kids, when they were punished, would go home and tell their parents, and their parents would come to school and give the teachers white envelopes, and the treatment would get better," he says. "But I never wanted to tell my parents what happened at school." At the age of 19, Kim taught himself English in the library using middle-school textbooks before escaping to college in rural Americus, Georgia. Returning to Korea, he became a teacher with a passion for fostering people's innate capacity to learn.

As I watch him kneel in the Mexican dirt, surrounded by eager kids, his face wreathed in a broad smile, he seems to delight in the way that the Teacher-Mate puts the kids in charge. "That's a phenomenon I've found even in Rwanda — where only 1% have electricity," he says. "With these devices, what the kids pick up in two minutes, the teachers need two hours to learn. The kids explore by themselves and figure it out. When you work with those kids directly, no matter where they are, they're so innovative."

For all his infectious passion, Kim would be the first to admit he has no specific plan for how the Pocket School might come to scale. His "development team" is an ad hoc group of volunteers — like Freedman and his 15-year-old brother,

Aaron, who composed the music for the fireman game. They have altruism and lots of heart, but they don't have a business plan.

Enter a self-described Iowa farm boy named Richard Rowe, who founded and leads an organization called the Open Learning Exchange, which is spreading educational technology by working closely with governments worldwide. Teaching is in Rowe's blood — his mother once taught in a one-room schoolhouse in a town called Buffalo Wallow. He has spent a lifetime at the intersection of technology and education. In 1964, while working for the American Institutes for Research, Rowe helped oversee the automation of secondary-school entrance exams across English-speaking West Africa. Until then, blue books traveled by train and steamship to England, taking an entire year to be graded and returned. "We flew an IBM 360 from Frankfurt to Lagos and brought in some scanners and introduced multiple-choice testing," he says. "That increased accuracy, cut the cost dramatically, and reduced the lag time from 12 months to one, transforming the lives of literally millions of kids almost overnight. That's a use of [technology] to transform education completely, and it's not even all that clever."

Rowe once headed the One Laptop Per Child Foundation, but came to believe that the much-hyped \$199 computers — funded by eBay, Google, and private donors for supply to the developing world, with the next, flashiest Yves Béhar — designed version coming in 2012 — were too clever by half. The OLPC project has been widely criticized for delays, cost overruns, and limitations in its software. Rowe says he had a more serious problem with it: He and OLPC founder Nicholas Negroponte "fundamentally disagreed about the approach to basic education. It was his belief that if you have a really neat technology, if you build it, they will come. I had been around a lot longer than he in this field and knew from my own experience that it's far more complicated than that." (Negroponte was unavailable for comment; Matt Keller of One Laptop Per Child says, "We provide the technology. That's who we are. At the same time, we're an organization that cares about supporting the writing of poetry, not about the pens.")

Taking a leaf from the burgeoning open-education movement — like MIT's Open CourseWare site, which provides all of the university's courses online for free — Rowe started the Open Learning Exchange with the redoubtable aim of providing quality basic education to 1 billion children in 100 countries by 2015. The OLE is structured as a global network of centers led by local social entrepreneurs who share materials, best practices, and new technologies. Already active in seven countries and setting up in several more, they are building a free "billion kids library" of open-source educational software and working with an eye toward adoption of technology-based educational "accelerators" by each country's government.

Rowe, who calls Innovations for Learning “one of our great partners,” says, “Content is king, and too often little attention is paid to content, as with One Laptop Per Child. TeacherMate is a shining exception to that rule. What makes it so good is the software: it actively engages the student and frees up the teacher to be more of a mentor.”

OLE Rwanda has launched a demonstration project with 500 TeacherMates supplied by Innovations for Learning; the project will compare them to OLPC’s XO laptop for effectiveness and cost-effectiveness. OLE Rwanda director Jacques Murinda says, “I think that the use of mobile phones in education has a great future even in developing countries. Teachers are being capacitated to use them, but children are already very creative in using them.” Another of the seven OLE centers, an organization in Andhra Pradesh, India, called the Rishi Valley Institute for Educational Resources, is also trying it out. Use of the TeacherMate, if successful, is likely to spread to other OLE centers; that’s what the exchange is designed to do.

However, Rowe says the TeacherMate software probably has a brighter future than the hardware. It could easily run on the next generation of cheap mobile phones as soon as an open, free platform like Android becomes more standard. “Mobile phones used offline have virtually the same features as the TeacherMate — screen, speaker, mic, buttons. Mobile phones will continue to be more iPhone/iPad-like in the not-too-distant future. And they can communicate two-way, which the TeacherMate does not.”

Rowe sees low-cost, appropriate mobile technology as just one piece of a greater educational strategy that also pays plenty of attention to fostering local leadership and collaboration. “The history of educational technology, which goes way, way back, is just full of graveyards,” he says. “Now can be different — maybe. Technology is getting smarter and cheaper. Software is getting more powerful and effective. The open-source movement is making content more widely available at much lower cost. But we need to recognize that the technology itself is only a very small part of the solution for ensuring highly effective education.”

The OLE’s business plan is to prove both the cost-effectiveness and teaching-effectiveness of these tools and strategies through research, so that governments around the world will be moved to take them up on a grand scale. “We have to be far more creative about appropriate information technology in the developing world,” Rowe says. “Our job is to enable a given country to take what is available and adapt it and try it out.”

Mobile phones have transformed communications, especially in the developing world, more swiftly than anyone could have imagined. The prospect of doing the same for education — putting best-of-breed learning software in kids' hands anytime, anywhere — is tantalizing. Yet not everyone is so excited about what might be called the iTeach future.

While a \$100 curriculum-in-a-box may seem like a good value even by developing-country standards, wide distribution would still be costly. Many experts maintain that educational interventions in the poorest countries should stick to even cheaper technologies that have already proven their value, like chalkboards and paper. “Before one can make use of a computer, reading and writing are fundamentals,” says Erin Ganju, CEO of the social enterprise Room to Read, which has built and stocked 9,000 developing-world libraries over the past decade with plain old paper books. “For as little as \$5 a year per child, we can create a well-stocked library with a trained librarian.”

And then there is the anticommercialization camp. Skeptics are wary about the motives of cell-phone makers and telecom-service providers, which would reap a windfall should governments embrace mobile learning — Unesco has estimated educational spending worldwide at \$2.5 trillion annually. And as with the boob tube before it, there's worry that wide adoption of mobile technologies for learning will give marketers direct access to a very impressionable demographic. “Cell phones are increasingly a way for advertisers to target children,” says Josh Golin of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood. “We've seen branded Burger King games downloaded to cell phones and text-message advertising sent to kids.”

But the biggest challenge to Pocket School — style learning may not be the business model. The same possibilities that make these technologies so exciting — the sight of Gemma, Eliana, Julissa, and Silvia pushing the buttons, controlling their own learning and their own destiny — make them threatening to the educational status quo. A system built around tools that allow children to explore and figure things out for themselves would be radical for most developing-world schools, which emphasize learning by rote. In the United States, which is currently so in love with state curriculum benchmarks and standardized tests, it could be just as hard a sell.

What's at issue is a deep cultural shift, a fundamental rethinking not only of how education is delivered but also of what “education” means. The very word comes from the Latin *duco*, meaning “to lead or command” — putting the learner in the passive position. Rabi Kamacharya is an MIT engineering grad who returned to his native Kathmandu from Silicon Valley to found a software company and

started OLE Nepal, the network's most established branch, in 2007. Kamacharya talks about technology putting "children in the driver's seat" — to overcome the limited skills of teachers: "Even in urban areas, teachers who teach English, for example, do not know English very well. Children are at the mercy of the teachers, who may not be motivated or have sufficient materials to work with. We want to enable them to go forward with self-learning and assessment."

This idea, common among these tech-driven educational entrepreneurs, imagines a new role for teachers. "The main transformational change that needs to happen is for the teacher to transform from the purveyor of information to the coach," says Weinberger of Innovations for Learning. As Rowe puts it, "Up until very recently, most communications were hub-and-spoke, one to many. The Internet is a many-to-many environment, which is in the early stages of having a major impact on education. It involves a fairly major change in the concept of what education is, which is one of the reasons we use the term 'learning' as distinct from 'education.' It's student-centered and student-empowered."

The challenge of putting such ideas into practice — and getting the kids into the educational driver's seat — is so daunting it's almost laughable. Still, when you've seen a tiny child eagerly embracing a device that lets her write, draw, figure out math, and eventually find an answer to any question she might ask, it's hard not to feel the excitement of the moment, or its revolutionary potential. We're talking about leapfrogging over massive infrastructure limitations to unleash what Kim calls "the only real renewable resource" — the inventive spark of 1 billion children. "They're creative, these children," he says, "no matter where they are."

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<http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/144/a-is-for-app.html>

# Traditional Schools Aren't Working. Let's Move Learning Online.

Katherine Mangu-Ward

*Reason Magazine*, April 6, 2010

We already work online, play online, and shop online. Why isn't school online?

Deep within America's collective consciousness, there is a little red schoolhouse. Inside, obedient children sit in rows, eagerly absorbing lessons as a kind, wise teacher writes on the blackboard. Shiny apples are offered as tokens of respect and gratitude.

The reality of American education is often quite different. Beige classrooms are filled with note-passers and texters, who casually ignore teachers struggling to make it to the end of the 50-minute period. Smart kids are bored, and slower kids are left behind. Anxiety about standardized tests is high, and scores are consistently low. National surveys find that parents despair over the quality of education in the United States—and they're right to, as test results confirm again and again.

But just as most Americans disapprove of congressional shenanigans while harboring some affection for their own representative, parents tend to say that their child's teacher is pretty good. Most people have mixed feelings about their own school days, but our national romance with teachers is deep and long-standing. Which is why the idea of kids staring at computers instead of teachers makes parents and politicians extremely nervous.

However, it's time to take online education seriously—because we've tried everything else. Education Secretary Arne Duncan debuted his Blueprint for Reform this month to mixed reviews, joining at least 30 years' worth of government officials who have promised that this time, honest, they're going to fix education. Even the reforms promoted by the much-ballyhooed federal Race to the Top funds, which are supposed to encourage innovative educational practices, offer mostly marginal changes to the status quo. In an early March speech on technology in education, Duncan touted \$500 million in new federal spending over 10 years to develop post-secondary online courses—an area of online education already thriving without federal assistance—thus arriving at the dance 15 years late and an awful lot more than a dollar short.

Since the Internet hit the big time in the mid-1990s, Amazon and eBay have

changed the way we shop, Google has revolutionized the way we find information, Facebook has superseded other ways to keep track of friends and iTunes has altered how we consume music. But kids remain stuck in analog schools. Part of the reason online education hasn't taken off is that powerful forces such as teachers unions—which prefer to keep students in traditional classrooms under the supervision of their members—are aligned against it.

So children continue to learn from blackboards and books—the kind made of dead trees! no hyperlinks!—rather than getting lessons the way they consume virtually all other information: online. Putting reading materials and lecture notes on the Internet, like many teachers do today, is just the first step; it's like when, in the early days of movies, filmmakers pointed a camera at a stage play. Kids are still stuck watching those old-style movies, when they could be enjoying the learning equivalent of “Avatar” in 3-D. Thousands of ninth-grade English teachers are cobbling together yet another lecture on the Globe Theatre in Shakespeare's day, when YouTube is overflowing with accessible, multimedia presentations from experts on Elizabethan theater construction, not to mention a very nice illustrated series on the Kennedy Center's ArtsEdge site.

In the 2010 annual letter from his foundation—the biggest in the United States, with a \$33 billion endowment—Bill Gates listed online education as one of his top priorities and rattled his pocket change in the direction of reform. He wrote: “Online learning can be more than lectures. Another element involves presenting information in an interactive form, which can be used to find out what a student knows and doesn't know.”

Right now, other than the venerable pop quiz, teachers have very few tools to gauge just how many students are grasping a concept in real time and reshape the curriculum to meet their needs.

How do we know online education will work? Well, for one thing, it already does. Full-time virtual charter schools are operating in dozens of states. The Florida Virtual School, which offers for-credit online classes to any child enrolled in the state system, has 100,000 students. Teachers are available by phone or e-mail from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week. The state cuts a funding check to the school only when students demonstrate that they have mastered the material, whether it takes them two months or two years. The program is one of the largest in the country. Kids who enroll in Advanced Placement courses—39 percent of whom are minority students—score an average of 3.05 out of 5, compared with a state average of 2.49 for public school students.

In his book on online education, “Disrupting Class,” Harvard Business School



professor Clayton Christensen estimates that half of all high school courses in the United States will be consumed over the Internet by 2019. But we have a long way to go to reach 50 percent. Seventeen percent of high school students nationwide took an online course for school last year; another 12 percent took a class for self-study. Many of these students, along with younger kids taking online classes, might be considered homeschooled, though that very concept is changing as they sign up with virtual schools connected to state systems.

Few people have a clear picture of what online education really looks like, which is one reason so many people are reluctant to consider what it has to offer. Learning online won't turn America into a nation of home-schooled nerds, sitting in their basements, keyboards clacking. And it doesn't mean handing your kids over to Rosie the Robot from "The Jetsons" for the day.

Moving lesson planning and delivery online can provide students with more supervision, not less, says Michael Horn, one of the co-authors of "Disrupting Class." It would free teachers, Horn says, "to do hand-holding and mentoring, something which is pretty much impossible in the current model." After all, where is it written that the babysitter, disciplinarian, lecturer and evaluator must all be the same person? Or even that they all have to be in the same building?

Some online learning models eliminate human interaction, but the vast majority do not. Instead, they connect students and teachers via polls, video, chat, text and good old-fashioned phone calls. The Virtual Virginia program focuses on offering Advanced Placement classes to every student in the state, bringing college-level courses to rural districts and inner-city Richmond, where high-level instruction is difficult to get. Rocketship Education, in San Jose, Calif., brings at-risk elementary students together in a safe, cheap, modular space along with a small staff and hands their studies over to online curriculum for part of each day.

Online education has already become a boon for kids with special needs, the students least served by the traditional system. Education entrepreneur Tom Vander Ark launched Internet Academy, the first online K-12 establishment, in 1995 in part to serve kids with unorthodox education requirements, from serious athletes to children with health problems or learning disabilities.

One of the most successful areas of online education so far is helping kids who have fallen off the educational grid. Companies such as AdvancePath Academics scoop up students classified as unrecoverable by traditional schools and help them complete their education. Some dropout-recovery programs can be found in shopping malls and gyms.

Online courses that allow kids to master material on their own schedule provide “a significant opportunity for students who were behind,” says Jim Shelton, assistant deputy secretary for innovation and improvement at the U.S. Department of Education. “Because if you require the same amount of time in a traditional classroom, how can anybody ever catch up?”

Online education gives students in dysfunctional urban districts the chance to enroll in high-quality classes or language instruction without an expensive move to a suburban district or a private school. Cities benefit, too, as families uncomfortable with the quality of urban public schools can continue to live near their downtown offices while enrolling their children in Web-based programs, reducing white flight and suburban sprawl.

Students and parents aren’t the only ones dissatisfied with the way American education works right now. Teachers are unhappy, too. They say they don’t have time for the kind of personal interaction that can make the biggest difference for a child. According to Julie Young, the president and chief executive of the Florida Virtual School, “most teachers and most students who are taking classes online say that they have more interaction with their teachers and students than they do in a traditional setting.”

While many remain skeptical, online educators say parents are more open to the idea than they used to be. Baltimore-based Connections Academy has an enrollment of 20,000 students in 14 states, providing a full educational package primarily outside a physical school. Chief executive Barbara Dreyer says that “questions like ‘does this even work?’ have died down.”

But though the families of students enrolled in online programs rave about them, cultural resistance has been slow to fade. And winning hearts and minds isn’t the only hurdle to widespread adoption: Virtual education remains essentially illegal in many states, including New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Seat-time requirements—which mandate that students’ butts be in classroom chairs, often within the sightline of a qualified teacher, for a certain number of hours—are a major barrier.

Old budgetary mechanisms aren’t well suited to the online world, either. In many states, if traditional schools lose students they lose state cash. In Wisconsin, legislators are trying to stop the Internet at county lines. State Sen. John Lehman, who heads his chamber’s education committee, secured a cap on out-of-county virtual school enrollment last year. His initial objections were budgetary: “Local districts have ongoing bricks-and-mortar costs,” he told me. But then he went on to repeat substantive objections shared by many opponents of online education, accusing

the school firms of “profiteering off of kids,” and worrying about quality control and the mechanics of online education for young grade-schoolers. He also traced the opposition back to teachers unions. “I think they’re fearful of virtual education in Wisconsin,” he said. “They don’t like to see the money leave bricks-and-mortar schools.”

Unions are right that virtual schools are competition. Oregon teachers unions, alarmed about declining enrollment in traditional schools, made fighting a Connections Academy charter school their top legislative priority last year, eventually forcing the legislature to cap enrollment in online schools and mandate face time with teachers, killing prospects for growth at one of the top-rated schools in the state.

The only way online education companies can respond to concerns about quality and age-appropriateness is if they are given the chance to experiment and win over students and parents. Government policies need to be tweaked, and companies need investment to grow. But for online education to really take off, we need to let the chalkboard in the little red schoolhouse go, and learn to love the glow of a child’s face lit by a laptop screen.

Katherine Mangu-Ward is a senior editor at *Reason* magazine. The article originally originally appeared in *The Washington Post* on Sunday, March 28, 2010.

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<http://reason.com/archives/2010/04/06/traditional-schools-arent-work>

# Freedom to Learn: The roles of play and curiosity as foundations for learning

by Peter Gray

*Psychology Today*, September 2, 2009

“Why Don’t Students Like School?” Well, Duhhhh...  
Children don’t like school because they love freedom.

Someone recently referred me to a book that they thought I’d like. It’s a 2009 book, aimed toward teachers of grades K through 12, titled *Why Don’t Students Like School?* It’s by a cognitive scientist named Daniel T. Willingham, and it has received rave reviews by countless people involved in the school system. Google the title and author and you’ll find pages and pages of dotting reviews and nobody pointing out that the book totally and utterly fails to answer the question posed by its title.

Willingham’s thesis is that students don’t like school because their teachers don’t have a full understanding of certain cognitive principles and therefore don’t teach as well as they could. They don’t present material in ways that appeal best to students’ minds. Presumably, if teachers followed Willingham’s advice and used the latest information cognitive science has to offer about how the mind works, students would love school.

Talk about avoiding the elephant in the room!

Ask any schoolchild why they don’t like school and they’ll tell you. “School is prison.” They may not use those words, because they’re too polite, or maybe they’ve already been brainwashed to believe that school is for their own good and therefore it can’t be prison. But decipher their words and the translation generally is, “School is prison.”

Let me say that a few more times: School is prison. School is prison. School is prison. School is prison. School is prison.

Willingham surely knows that school is prison. He can’t help but know it; everyone knows it. But here he writes a whole book entitled “Why Don’t Students Like School,” and not once does he suggest that just possibly they don’t like school

because they like freedom, and in school they are not free.

I shouldn't be too harsh on Willingham. He's not the only one avoiding this particular elephant in the room. Everyone who has ever been to school knows that school is prison, but almost nobody says it. It's not polite to say it. We all tiptoe around this truth, that school is prison, because telling the truth makes us all seem so mean. How could all these nice people be sending their children to prison for a good share of the first 18 years of their lives? How could our democratic government, which is founded on principles of freedom and self-determination, make laws requiring children and adolescents to spend a good portion of their days in prison? It's unthinkable, and so we try hard to avoid thinking it. Or, if we think it, we at least don't say it. When we talk about what's wrong with schools we pretend not to see the elephant, and we talk instead about some of the dander that's gathered around the elephant's periphery.

But I think it is time that we say it out loud. School is prison.

If you think school is not prison, please explain the difference.

The only difference I can think of is that to get into prison you have to commit a crime, but they put you in school just because of your age. In other respects school and prison are the same. In both places you are stripped of your freedom and dignity. You are told exactly what you must do, and you are punished for failing to comply. Actually, in school you must spend more time doing exactly what you are told to do than is true in adult prisons, so in that sense school is worse than prison.

At some level of their consciousness, everyone who has ever been to school knows that it is prison. How could they not know? But people rationalize it by saying (not usually in these words) that children need this particular kind of prison and may even like it if the prison is run well. If children don't like school, according to this rationalization, it's not because school is prison, but is because the wardens are not kind enough, or amusing enough, or smart enough to keep the children's minds occupied appropriately.

But anyone who knows anything about children and who allows himself or herself to think honestly should be able to see through this rationalization. Children, like all human beings, crave freedom. They hate to have their freedom restricted. To a large extent they use their freedom precisely to educate themselves. They are biologically prepared to do that. That's what many of my previous posts have been about (for an overview, see my July 16, 2008, post). Children explore and play, freely, in ways designed to learn about the physical and social world in which they

are developing. In school they are told they must stop following their interests and, instead, do just what the teacher is telling them they must do. That is why they don't like school.

As a society we could, perhaps, rationalize forcing children to go to school if we could prove that they need this particular kind of prison in order to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to become good citizens, to be happy in adulthood, and to get good jobs. Many people, perhaps most people, think this has been proven, because the educational establishment talks about it as if it has. But, in truth, it has not been proven at all.

In fact, for decades, families who have chosen to “unschool” their children, or to send them to the Sudbury Valley School (which is, essentially, an “unschool” school) have been proving the opposite (see, for example, my August 13, 2008, post). Children who are provided the tools for learning, including access to a wide range of other people from whom to learn, learn what they need to know—and much more—through their own self-directed play and exploration. There is no evidence at all that children who are sent to prison come out better than those who are provided the tools and allowed to use them freely. How, then, can we continue to rationalize sending children to prison?

I think the educational establishment deliberately avoids looking honestly at the experiences of unschoolers and Sudbury Valley because they are afraid of what they will find. If school as prison isn't necessary, then what becomes of this whole huge enterprise, which employs so many and is so fully embedded in the culture (see my posts on Why Schools Are What they Are)?

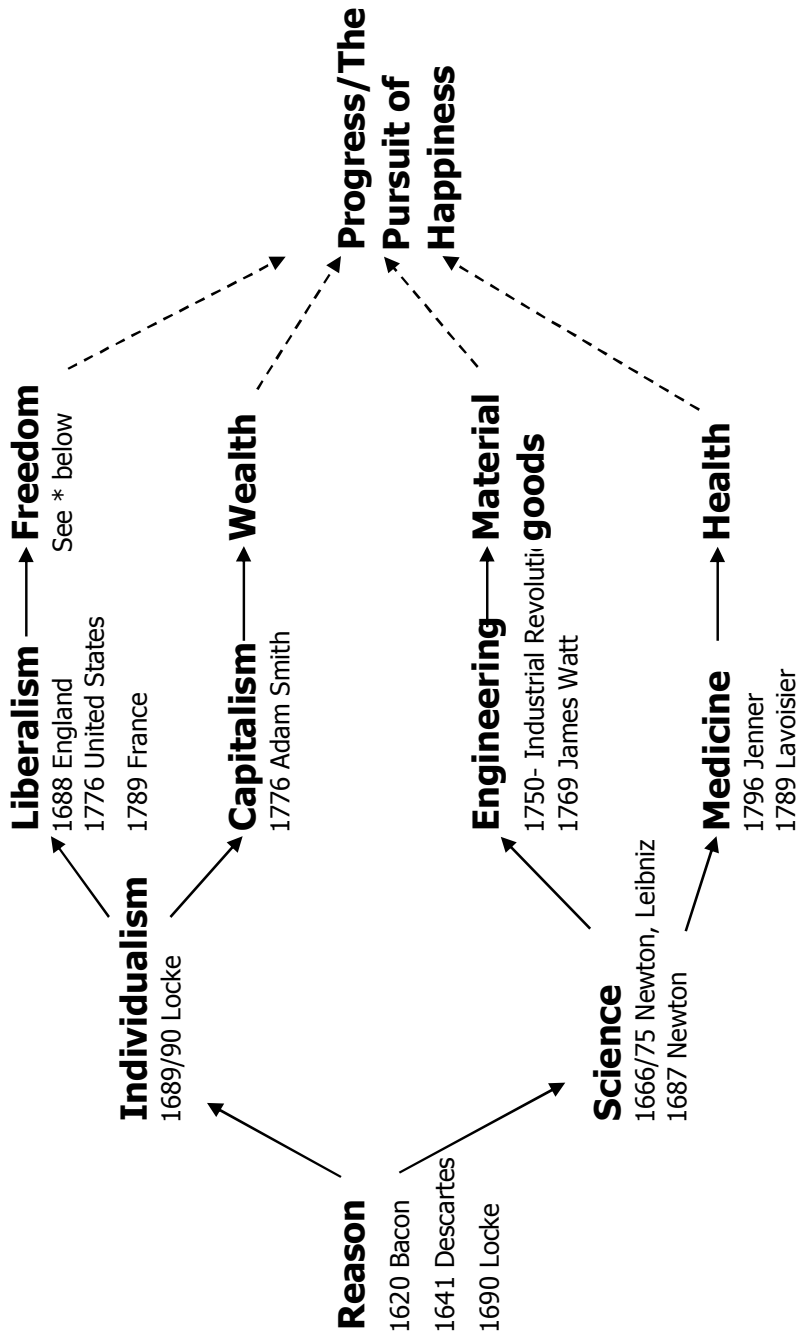
Willingham's book is in a long tradition of attempts to bring the “latest findings” of psychology to bear on issues of education. All of those efforts have avoided the elephant and focused instead on trying to clean up the dander. But as long as the elephant is there, the dander just keeps piling up.

In a future post I'll talk about some of the history of psychology's failed attempts to improve education. Every new generation of parents, and every new batch of fresh and eager teachers, hears or reads about some “new theory” or “new findings” from psychology that, at long last, will make schools more fun and improve learning. But none of it has worked. And none of it will until people face the truth: Children hate school because in school they are not free. Joyful learning requires freedom.

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<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/200909/why-don-t-students-school-well-duhhhh>

# The Enlightenment Vision



- \* 1764 Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishment*
- 1780s: Last witches legally burned in Europe
- 1784 American Society for Abolition of Slavery
- 1787 British Society for Abolition of Slave Trade
- 1788 French Société des Amis des Noirs
- 1792 Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*

Stephen Hicks, 2004

## *Postmodern Quotations*

1. Michel Foucault: “It is meaningless to speak in the name of—or against—Reason, Truth, or Knowledge”
2. Stanley Fish: Deconstruction “relieves me of the obligation to be right ... and demands only that I be interesting.” (*Is There a Text in this Class?*)
3. Frank Lentricchia: Postmodernism “seeks not to find the foundation and the conditions of truth but to exercise power for the purpose of social change.” One’s task as a professor is to help students “spot, confront, and work against the political horrors of one’s time.” (*Criticism & Social Change*)
4. Andrea Dworkin: “The normal fuck by a normal man is taken to be an act of invasion and ownership undertaken in a mode of predation.”
5. Andrea Dworkin: “Women have been chattels to men as wives, as prostitutes, as sexual and reproductive servants. Being owned and being fucked are or have been virtually synonymous experiences in the lives of women. He owns you; he fucks you. The fucking conveys the quality of ownership: he owns you inside out.” (*Intercourse*)
6. Jean-François Lyotard: “Saddam Hussein is a product of Western departments of state and big companies, just as Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco were born of the ‘peace’ imposed on their countries by the victors of the Great War. Saddam is such a product in an even more flagrant and cynical way. But the Iraqi dictatorship proceeds, as do the others, from the transfer of aporias [problems] in the capitalist system to vanquished, less developed, or simply less resistant countries.” (*Postmodern Fables*)
7. Michel Foucault: “Prison is the only place where power is manifested in its naked state, in its most excessive form, and where it is justified as moral force. ... What is fascinating about prisons is that, for once, power doesn’t hide or mask itself; it reveals itself as tyranny pursued into the tiniest details; it is cynical and at the same time pure and entirely ‘justified,’ because its practice can be totally formulated within the framework of morality.” (*Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*)
8. Jacques Derrida: “[D]econstruction never had meaning or interest, at least in my eyes, than as a radicalization, that is to say, also *within the tradition* of a certain Marxism, in a certain *spirit of Marxism*.” (*Moscou aller-retour*)



## *Anna Peck Sill*

(President of Rockford College, in 1868)

### *In The Beginning*

Rockford Seminary was founded as a collegiate institute for young women, with the design of affording opportunity for as thorough intellectual and Christian culture as is provided for young men in our best colleges ...

By a careful estimate, it is believed that fuel, lights, washing (not ironing), books, library and society fees, need not cost over \$25 a year, while they may cost more than double that amount through want of economy.

As to clothing, very few dresses are needed by the student, and they should be plain and inexpensive, and so made as to require but little labor in repairing. Two dresses suitable for the study and class room, a third when the day's work is done, another for church and public days in the institution such as would be suitable for a quiet home gathering, and a plain white dress for anniversary, are a sufficient supply. We hope no one will fail to furnish herself with two domestic aprons covering the entire dress, also flannels, a waterproof cloak, India rubber overshoes, and an umbrella.

Some of our best students have made their annual expense for dress about \$50. We feel that the present tendency to extravagance in dress and style is pernicious in many ways, and that Christian institutions of learning should see to it that they do not foster the evil that is so seriously affecting the health, and the intellectual, social and moral character of the women of America. The dress of our students we believe to be a matter of highest importance in its influence upon character and future usefulness.

**Source:** Nelson, C. Hal, Ed. *Rockford College: A Retrospective Look*. Rockford: Rockford College, 1980. p.8

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From *The Chronicle of Higher Education*:  
July 31, 2006

## WHICH ATHLETES HAVE THE BEST — AND WORST — MORAL-REASONING SKILLS

In measurements of college athletes' moral reasoning, players of team sports — and in particular, team contact sports — fare significantly worse than those who play individual sports, according to Sharon K. Stoll, a sports ethicist from the University of Idaho.

She believes that is partly because team-sport athletes often do not make as many decisions during games. In basketball and football, for example, coaches call many of the plays from the sidelines.

Contrast that to, say, golf and tennis, where players are given greater responsibility. In golf, players must mark penalties on their scorecards for certain errors, and in tennis, athletes call their own lines.

When athletes are given more individual responsibility, Ms. Stoll says, they tend to have higher moral-reasoning ability and make better ethical decisions.

Athletes who play sports in which players are allowed to make contact have the lowest moral-reasoning skills, Ms. Stoll says. "When you're allowed to hit someone within the rules, you start to view your opponent as an object and not human," she says.

Contact sports also allow athletes more opportunities to break the rules, she says. For example, football players can hold an opponent's breastplate, or lacrosse players can jab a competitor with a stick.

Not surprisingly therefore, athletes who play lacrosse, ice hockey, and football score, on average, the lowest of all college athletes. Golfers and tennis players fare best.

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# *Solving the Problem of Poverty*

Steve Mariotti

Founder and CEO of the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE)

*Executive Speeches*, 13(5), (April 1999), pp. 20-23.

I know a secret which, if fully understood by our government, business and community leaders, could have enormous positive implications for the future of our society. Simply put, the secret is this: Children born into poverty have special gifts that prepare them for business formation and wealth creation. They are mentally strong, resilient, and full of chutzpa. They are skeptical of hierarchies and the status quo. They are long-suffering in the face of adversity. They are comfortable with risk and uncertainty. They know how to deal with stress and conflict.

These are the attitudes and abilities that make them ideally suited for breaking out of the cycle of dependency that so often comes with poverty and for getting ahead in the marketplace. In short, poor kids are “street smart,” or what we at the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) call “business smart.” Precisely because of their poverty — that is, because of their experience surviving in a challenging world — they are able to perceive and pursue fleeting opportunities that others, more content with their lot in life, tend to miss.

Children born into poverty have all the characteristics of the classic entrepreneurs like Henry Ford, Andrew Carnegie, and Thomas Edison — the heroes of our capitalist system. It stands to reason, therefore, that as a society we should make special efforts to encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills among low-income youths. But we have done just the opposite, spending over \$1.5 trillion since the beginning of the “War on Poverty” in the 1960s on public assistance programs that are actually designed to protect children from the free enterprise system.

In today’s dollars, \$1.5 trillion would be enough to purchase half of all the Fortune 500 companies in America. Such a colossal malinvestment has cost millions of dollars in lost revenue, and it has also discouraged millions of would-be young entrepreneurs from ever entering the marketplace.

This is a particular personal tragedy for children born into poverty, for, as the Nobel Prize winning economist F.A. Hayek once noted, the free market offers the most effective way of identifying what we are good at and how our comparative advantages can be developed. Public assistance limits and, in many cases even prevents, its recipients from engaging in this vital process of self-

discovery. As a result, generation after generation of children born into poverty are settling for the security of welfare while missing out on the thrills and challenges of competition. Properly developed, their skills might be highly valued in the marketplace — but they will never find out.

Even more misguided than our national welfare strategy is our 7.5 million-word tax code. Even the most respected tax experts can't claim to understand fully this maze of vague and often contradictory rules that runs no less than 38,000 pages. How can we expect young people who have never even seen a W-2 form to make sense out of the thousands of tax regulations that apply to starting and running a business? The U.S. tax code has been a terrible burden for the business community, but for low-income youths it has been absolutely devastating.

Besides the length of the tax code, there is something even more insidious: The code itself changes all the time. There is no constant body of information that can be regarded as definite and by the \$1.5 trillion I mentioned earlier has been minimal in comparison with the psychological damage to millions of people who have been told, in effect, by welfare and tax bureaucrats that they are “worthless goods” in the marketplace and that they will be rewarded for unproductive behavior.

I founded the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) on the premise, which is still a secret to most, that children born into poverty have enormous potential in business. Let me share with you some of the history of NFTE.

After receiving an M.B.A. from the University of Michigan, I won a Liberty Fund fellowship to study Austrian economics at the Institute for Humane Studies (IHS) with F.A. Hayek, who had just won the Nobel Peace Prize in Economics. Although I was well versed in free market principles because of my contacts at places such as Hillsdale College, this fellowship enabled me to increase my knowledge of Austrian trade cycle theory and international finance.

After leaving IHS, I spent the next 30 months at Ford Motor Company as the South African and Latin American treasury analyst. Then I pulled up stakes and moved to New York to open an import-export firm specializing in African small business. This was great fun, and my business was profitable. But, as it happened, in 1981, I was robbed and beaten by a group of young men.

As a way of working through this traumatic event, I began a career as a special education teacher in New York's most difficult impoverished neighborhoods. My first year was almost as traumatic as the mugging. I was assigned remedial students. In each of my classes, there was a group of six or seven students whose behavior was so disruptive that I had to stop the class every five minutes to get them to quiet down. On one occasion, in my third-period class,

I was forced to throw out all the boys.

Ironically, it was these “troublemakers” who provided me with the valuable insight that set me on the road to teaching entrepreneurship. I took them out to dinner one evening and asked them why they had acted so badly in class. They said my class was boring and I had nothing to teach them. I asked if anything I taught in class interested them. One fellow responded that I had caught his attention when I had discussed my import-export business. He rattled off various figures I had mentioned in class, calculated my profit margin, and concluded that my business was doing well.

I was dazzled to find such business smarts in a student whom the public schools had labeled “borderline retarded.” This was my first inkling that something was wrong not only with my teaching but also with the standard remedial education curriculum.

Meanwhile, the situation at school worsened. I began to lose control of my classroom, almost on a daily basis. One student set fire to the back of another student’s coat — the student with the coat was as astonished as I was. In a rage, I ordered the arsonist out of class, and he was expelled the same day. Days later, I was locked out of my eighth-period class. The students wouldn’t open the door. Finally, just as I was going to admit defeat and find a security guard, one of the girls took pity on me and opened it.

I didn’t know how to deal with this kind of nightmarish situation. I wanted to walk out of school and call it quits. After a minute or two, I realized that I couldn’t do that. I stepped into the hallway to regain my composure. I thought about my dinner with the young men from my third-period class. They had said I was boring — except when I talked about business and about making money. I walked back into the classroom, and without any introductory comments, launched a mock sales pitch, selling my own watch to the class. I enumerated the benefits of the watch. I explained why the students should purchase it from me at the low price of only \$6. The students quieted down and became interested in hearing what I had to say. I didn’t know it at the time, but this incident, born of desperation, was pointing me toward my real vocation — teaching entrepreneurship to low-income youths.

After I had gained the students’ attention, I moved from the sales talk into a conventional “buy low/sell high,” and on the more advanced concept of “return on investment.”

Before long, I began offering a special class, “How to Start, Finance, and Manage a Small Business — A Guide for the Urban Entrepreneur.” During the next seven years, this course became so successful that even the most challenging and disruptive students settled down and learned a great deal. In my

last teaching assignment in the Fort Apache area of the South Bronx, 100 percent of my students started small businesses and reported that they experienced major positive changes in their lives. The difference teaching entrepreneurship seemed to be making in regard to student behavior was incredible; I noticed among my students that chronic problems such as absenteeism, dropping out, pregnancy, drug use, drug dealing and violent behavior seemed to be significantly alleviated.

The overwhelming success of this class gave me the confidence to launch the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) in 1988. NFTE's mission is to teach low-income youths the basics of starting their own businesses by creating a curriculum, training teachers, and providing graduate services. NFTE has year-round programs in eight cities and license agreements in Scotland, Belgium, and soon, Argentina. We have 21,000 graduates, all of whom have learned the basics of the free enterprise economy.

In 1993, in conjunction with the Heller School at Brandeis University, we completed a study which found that NFTE program graduates were far more likely than their peers to start a business. Here are some specifics: 32 times more NFTE graduates than non-graduates were running a business, and a post program survey found that 33 percent of those graduates were still running a business. And in 1998, the David H. Koch Charitable Foundation sponsored one of the most comprehensive examinations of entrepreneurship training ever conducted. An organization known as Research & Evaluation for Philanthropy tracked two different randomly selected groups: one comprised of 120 low-income Washington, D.C., residents between the ages of 18 and 30 who had completed the NFTE program and one comprised of 152 of their peers who had received no training. Here are some of the highlights of the Koch study:

- 91 percent of the NFTE alumni stated that they wanted to start their own business, compared with 75 percent of the comparison group and 50 percent of the U.S. public.
- NFTE alumni were two times more likely to be current business owners (12 percent in the NFTE group vs. 5 percent in the comparison group). In fact, the rate of business formation was substantially higher than the 1-3 percent rate for minority adults nationwide.
- NFTE participation increased the likelihood of starting a business four-fold.
- NFTE increased high school students' exposure to business and entrepreneurship training fourteen-fold.
- 88 percent of NFTE alumni stated that they gave serious consideration to going into business after completing the program.

- 99 percent of NFTE alumni indicated that the program gave them a more positive view of business, and they were two times more likely to predict that they would own a business in five years.
- 68 percent of NFTE alumni were the first in their families to start a business.
- 97 percent of NFTE alumni reported improved business skills and knowledge.
- 100 percent said they would recommend the program to others.
- NFTE alumni were two times less likely to prefer government employment over business ownership and corporate management.

This study demonstrates that teaching about the free enterprise system and encouraging children to start businesses and create wealth are powerful tools that promote independence and self-sufficiency.

Today, we at NFTE are confident that our program is adding significant value to thousands of young people's lives. We plan to "go to scale" and create a national movement in which every low-income child is taught entrepreneurial skills and elementary business principles.

Our plan is two-fold. First, we intend to recruit the best business and academic minds to help us in our efforts. NFTE's board and sponsors now include some of America's leading businessmen and philanthropists.

Second, we intend to use high technology in all of NFTE's teaching models. This will help our students to compete in the 21st century. Through an exciting partnership with Microsoft, NFTE has developed BizTech, a state-of-the-art learning site that offers an on-line curriculum. BizTech lets students anywhere in the world access information on entrepreneurship 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week. Under the direction of NFTE's CEO, Michael J. Caslin III, BizTech will also enable them to begin trading online.

BizTech is currently operating as a pilot program in dozens of schools, and it has generated a huge positive response. Fortunately, we are now able to deliver much of our program at a fraction of the initial cost. And a great selling point for the program is the fact that the administrative record-keeping function is on-line, which liberates the teacher from cumbersome paperwork and allows him to become a true guide and coach. Perhaps most exciting is the news that NFTE, in cooperation with some of the country's leading educators, is developing state-of-the-art lesson plans that fully integrate information technology into a classroom environment.

At NFTE, the future is bright for low-income youths. By combining the most recent technology with the time-tested principles of capitalism, we are developing solutions for one of the most serious threats to our society: poverty. Sure, we are small, but we are growing like a mustard seed.

One of our greatest strengths is the unquenchable optimism of the young men and women we serve. As one of NFTE's graduates put it so aptly, "My dream is not to die in poverty, but to have poverty die in me."

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# To understand education budget, start with math

Tom McClintock

Tom McClintock represents the 19th District in the California State Senate.

*Los Angeles Daily News*, May 15, 2005

The multimillion-dollar campaign paid by starving teachers unions has finally placed our sadly neglected schools at the center of the budget debate.

Across California, children are bringing home notes warning of dire consequences if Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's scorched-earth budget is approved — a budget that slashes Proposition 98 public-school spending from \$42.2 billion this year all the way down to \$44.7 billion next year.

That should be proof enough that our math programs are suffering.

As a public-school parent, I have given this crisis a great deal of thought and have a modest suggestion to help weather these dark days.

Maybe — as a temporary measure only — we should spend our school dollars on our schools. I realize that this is a radical departure from current practice, but desperate times require desperate measures.

The governor proposed spending \$10,084 per student from all sources. Devoting all of this money to the classroom would require turning tens of thousands of school bureaucrats, consultants, advisers and specialists onto the streets with no means of support or marketable job skills, something that no enlightened social democracy should allow.

So I will begin by excluding from this discussion the entire budget of the State Department of Education, as well as the pension system, debt service, special education, child care, nutrition programs and adult education. I also propose setting aside \$3 billion to pay an additional 30,000 school bureaucrats \$100,000 per year with the proviso that they stay away from the classroom and pay their own hotel bills at conferences.

This leaves a mere \$6,937 per student, which, for the duration of the funding crisis, I propose devoting to the classroom.

To illustrate how we might scrape by at this subsistence level, let's use a hypothetical school of 180 students with only \$1.2 million to get through the year.

We have all seen the pictures of filthy bathrooms, leaky roofs, peeling paint and crumbling plaster to which our children have been condemned. I propose that we rescue them from this squalor by leasing out luxury commercial office space. Our school will need 4,800 square feet for five classrooms (the sixth class is gym). At \$33 per foot, an annual lease will cost \$158,400.

This will provide executive washrooms, around-the-clock janitorial service, wall-to-wall carpeting, utilities and music in the elevators. We'll also need new desks to preserve the professional ambience.

Next, we'll need to hire five teachers, but not just any teachers. I propose hiring only associate professors from the California State University at their level of pay. Since university professors generally assign more reading, we'll need 12 of the latest edition, hardcover books for each student at an average \$75 per book, plus an extra \$5 to have the student's name engraved in gold leaf on the cover.

Since our conventional gym classes haven't stemmed the childhood obesity epidemic, I propose replacing them with an annual membership at a private health club for \$39.95 per month. Finally, we'll hire an \$80,000 administrator with a \$40,000 secretary because, well, I don't know exactly why, but we always have.

Our bare-bones budget comes to this:

5 classrooms —	\$158,400
150 desks @ \$130 —	\$ 19,500
180 annual health club memberships @ \$480 —	\$ 86,400
2,160 textbooks @ \$80 —	\$172,800
5 CSU associate professors @ \$67,093 —	\$335,465
1 administrator —	\$ 80,000
1 secretary —	\$ 40,000
24 percent faculty and staff benefits —	\$109,312
Offices, expenses and insurance —	\$ 30,000
TOTAL —	\$1,031,877

The school I have just described is the school we're paying for. Maybe it's time to ask why it's not the school we're getting.

Other, wiser, governors have made the prudent decision not to ask such embarrassing questions of the education-industrial complex because it makes

them very angry. Apparently the unions believe that with enough of a beating, Gov. Schwarzenegger will see things the same way.

Perhaps. But there's an old saying that you can't fill a broken bucket by pouring more water into it. Maybe it's time to fix the bucket.

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## Global Problems Are Too Big for Little Kids

By Stephen H.C. Hicks

The local newspaper in the Indiana town where I was teaching last year ran a contest for schoolchildren. The students were to create a one-frame cartoon on any topic; the best would be published on the "Kid's Page." A sample of the winning entries revealed a common theme.

A girl in Grade 2 drew a sad-faced planet Earth, with the caption, "I am weary. I am tired. Please quit wasting me!" A boy in Grade 6 sketched some mountain-sized hills beside a sign reading "Landfill," with one tiny person pointing out to another.

"Here we have the tallest hill in Bloomington." A girl in Grade 3 depicted a number of crying animals looking at a house under construction with some smokestacks in the background; the caption read, "We want our homes back!!" Other entries showed black South Africans being crushed under the boot of apartheid, mushroom clouds emerging from back yards, and forests being cut down by huge chain saws.

Such a common focus could be coincidence, conscious indoctrination, or the honest effort of teachers to get students involved in important issues. Some teachers do use their power to indoctrinate; most of us have had experience with them. But most

teachers are motivated by the best of intentions: They want their students to become informed, independent and committed thinkers.

Even so, we have a real problem: Many children are coming home from school frightened. After some coaxing, the parent is told that the child fears the world is a cold and scary place. All the furry animals are being killed and all the nice green trees are being cut down. Even breathing the air is dangerous.

It's a truism that you can't teach calculus before arithmetic. In trying to convey their sense of urgency about the world's problems, many teachers are committing an analogous error:

Children are not able to deal with problems of international garbage disposal when they are still grappling with issues of personal hygiene. They are not able to put in context issues of international race relations when they are struggling with how to deal with schoolyard bullies and being talked about behind their backs.

When students are overloaded, they become frustrated and frightened. When they think the problems they are being asked to consider are too much to absorb, they give up trying to understand. If the teacher persists, the student simply mouths the appropriate words to appease him or her.

My college freshmen classes are

regularly populated by young adults who are convinced that no solutions are possible and so it's useless to try, or who are so desperate for answers that they latch on to the first semi-plausible solution they encounter and become close-minded. Both apathy and dogmatism are defense mechanisms against feeling that you are living in a hostile world whose problems are too big for you to handle. And these are attitudes children often acquire early in their school careers.

This does not mean educators and parents should pretend that problems do not exist. But many of these issues, by definition, are complex global issues—issues that many adults have difficulties dealing with intellectually and emotionally. We need to take extra pains to teach our children about the principles involved on a scale they can grasp.

If we want our six- and seven-year-olds to be ready to deal with acid rain when their time comes, teach them now how to care for a 30-gallon aquarium and why they shouldn't throw candy wrappers into the ravine. If we want them in a position to deal with the Saddam Hussein's of the world, help them now to evolve strategies for dealing with the little tyrant who extorts their lunch money and the kid who always wants to copy their homework. These are the

problems they are engaged with and ready to consider solutions for. Do not ask them now what they would do if terrorists exploded chemical weapons above their town or what we could do if the food chain were irreparably damaged by pollution, for the child can only think, "If I could die at any moment, what's the use of worrying about anything?"

Frightened or apathetic children are not going to grow into the adults who will be able to solve the world's problems. Problem-solving requires confidence that solutions can be discovered and a healthy self-esteem about one's ability to find them. These attitudes require nurturing over a long period of time, on countless small, day-to-day issues. Too much too fast can only destroy them.

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## Evaluation of Oral Presentation

**Name:** Name on —ism

	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>
<i>Group scores</i>		
<b>Presentation of philosophical theory</b>	<b>25</b>	
<b>Presentation of educational philosophy &amp; strategy</b>	<b>25</b>	
<b>Presentation of educational practices</b>	<b>25</b>	
<i>Individual scores</i>		
<b>Response to questions</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>Voice, Contact, Professionalism</b>	<b><u>15</u></b>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>