

TIMELESS DEDICATION: MONTESSORI FROM THE DEPTH OF THE SOUL

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“To treat life as less than a miracle is to give up on it.” (Wendell Berry)

This talk is dedicated to my blood sister Jessica, my soul sister Angela, and my friends Tom and Mary Loew. Please visualize 3 roses on this podium.

Why did we come to this work? What attracts us to this?

I believe it is a calling. We want the world to be different. (This was evident in the number of inquiries we received on our training course after 9/11.) We want to do something that makes a difference. We want to advocate for the child due to each of our own particular circumstances, history, or commitment.

We are drawn to the young child because of particular **characteristics**/ reminders of their goodness and how we aspire to be more like them:

The child is so **in the present**. He doesn't hold onto yesterday, and doesn't worry about tomorrow. He can immerse himself in the now. [“Even if I knew the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.” Martin Luther King, Jr.]

The young child accepts and embraces what surrounds him. He incarnates his environment, as is, without wishing it to be different, or complaining that it isn't fair or good enough. He does not judge by class, race, gender, or any other “-ism.” His **love** is **unconditional**. Often we think of a child's **innocence**. Isn't this the child's pure acceptance, expecting life to be good, people to be loving, etc? *Can we find this kind of acceptance in ourselves?*

The child is able to **forgive** in the truest sense of the word. There is no superiority, where she grants forgiveness from a place of power or with any goal. With sincerity, she moves on, and is puzzled if we are stuck with our own errors and transgressions. She does not incriminate or blame the offender, but just accepts and endures. *Can we forgive others and ourselves in the same way?*

The child shows incessant **curiosity**. The world is a field of exploration, where the child can't resist involvement. Everything fills her with **wonder**. There is no boredom, lethargy or apathy, but instead a freshness and passion in all that is encountered. [Art's description of a person with whom he spoke last night: “a breath of fresh air.” Every experience for the child is as dramatic and compelling as our watching the landing on the moon – listen to the 2nd half of the soundtrack of “The Dish” – or the Haleybob comet or the Leonid showers. The spirit vibrates from these grand experiences.] *What kind of adults would we be if we could behold like the child?*

The child **falls in love** with the world again and again. He shows this by his intense concentration, his squeals of delight, his lengthy explorations, and so on. *Falling in love is pleasurable and profound. Can we fall in love with the world—again and again?*

The young child shows **compassion, charity and generosity**. Quickly she comes to the aid of another because she sees that her help is needed. She does this spontaneously, and also can refrain from helping when she is not needed. She just seems to know how much and when is appropriate. She is naturally cooperative, rather than competitive. *Can we find in ourselves the same great humanitarian feeling?*

I'd like to share a story told by a priest from his experience as a camp counselor during his youth. He spoke of a multi-handicapped child who almost won a race, but turned back and saw how one of his friends was not going in the right direction. He went back to help the slowest of the group; all the contestants saw this and joined the last child, and they came in together, with great joy.

You may recall the particular scene in the movie (or book) "Sea Biscuit" where the horse is back after its injury, reconnected with his first jockey who is riding him after his own terrible accident. The jockey who was his substitute had been taught everything about how to work with Sea Biscuit, which included getting head to head with another horse. This would be what Sea Biscuit needed to take off and win the race. So the substitute jockey saw that they were way behind, and he slowed down his horse to allow SB what he needed to race again. He gave up his chance of winning out of love, to see again the jockey and horse at their best. To me, this particular scene shows the power of love over the lust for power.

The young child sees **beauty** for what it really is, rather than cosmetic external physical traits. He loves his mother, and his teacher, without reservation, and thinks of her/them as the most beautiful women/men on earth (no matter what their appearance). [read from the essay, "Letter to my Mother" in the book Small Wonder by Barbara Kingsolver, Harper Collins, 2002, pp. 161-2] *Is our love so generous?*

He shows **maximum effort**. He puts his whole heart, his whole being into what he does. This engagement has no self-consciousness, and does not look for praise, recognition, or short-cuts. He is totally fully involved. *Don't we search for our engagement in the same way?*

The child shows **persistence**. It doesn't matter if she fails at an attempt. Instead she tries again and again, unencumbered with embarrassment. There is no ego in the way of this ability to be a beginner at anything she attempts. She is free to improve and to expand, learning from whatever is her starting place. *Can we sustain our own tasks out of true persistence?*

We are transformed by the child. We the educator, if dedicated to the noble traits of childhood, renew our own goodness and wholeness. These children give back. They educate us.

Expectant parents ponder all that they will teach their child, but the truth is that they are the ones who are about to embark on the largest learning experience of their lives. Their child will teach them about themselves, about him, and about humanity. *The adult thereby is matured by the child.*

"The child is the only point on which there converges from everyone a feeling of gentleness and love. People's souls soften and sweeten when one speaks of children; the whole of mankind shares in the deep emotions which they awaken. The child is a well-spring of love. Whenever we touch the child, we touch love. It is a difficult love to define; we all feel it, but no one can describe its roots.....In the vicinity of children mistrusts melts away; we become sweet and kindly, because, when we are gathered about them, we feel warmed by that flame of life which is there, where life originates." (*The Absorbent Mind* Clarendon translation, NY 288-289)

➤ *Children teach us to respect.*

I can't help but ask that we consider all the ways in which our work is about human development. I mean that it is ageless (or should I say "age-full?"), rather than specifically about our task with the child. Are we ageists if our treatment of human beings differs depending on their age? All our work is timeless and without frontiers. Genuine encounters with the child grow our capacity for more authentic compassionate relationships in general. It seems that true transformation of the adult results in a different view of humankind. There fails to be room for hypocrisy or double standards in how we treat our young compared to how we treat our spouses, our significant others, our family and friends, our colleagues and even those whom we encounter in just the daily errands and outings of our lives. The child transforms our very way of seeing life itself.

It saddens me to enter a school, and within each of the classrooms, see phenomenal activity, but know that there are closed doors, barriers between each of the teachers, and/or the administrator, or parents. And when we step outside of our small circles, do we have an attitude of inclusion? Are we able to move beyond prejudices as we encounter other Montessorians who may have different training credentials, and do we reach out to those serving the child by other approaches than our own? It is my hope that this talk is helpful to each of us as we take inventory on our relationships, so that we examine how we treat adults with the same concern as our treatment of children. As we nurture others we nurture ourselves. *The lessons of nurturance come from being with the child.*

➤ **CHILDREN MAKE US INTO SCIENTISTS.**

As scientists, we create a prepared environment, knowing the materials, and the theory that guides us to know why the materials would be attractive to the child, and how to see this.

➤ *Preparing a beautiful environment for children makes us lovers of beauty.*

"The objects surrounding the child should look solid and attractive to him, and the house of the child should be lovely and pleasant in its particulars; for beauty in the school invites activity and work. It is almost possible to say that there is a mathematical relationship between the beauty of his surroundings and the activity of the child; he will make discoveries rather more voluntarily in a gracious setting than in an ugly one." (*The Child in the Family* 43.)

"The place best adapted to the life of man is an artistic environment, and that, therefore, if we want the school to become a laboratory for the observation of human life, we must gather together within it things of beauty." (*Advanced Montessori Method-I* 114)

➤ *Children challenge us through the prepared environment.*

We must continuously evaluate whether the varied interests are being served. Our goal is to link the child to the environment to engage her in activity so that she encounters challenge that is physically and psychologically proportionate. In the book *Flow*, by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, this perfect state of "flow" is finding the right match of interest and ability, so that there is enough arousal without causing anxiety. The lack of challenge is just as important to avoid, as it results in boredom and fatigue.

"We must, therefore, quit our roles as jailers and instead take care to prepare an environment in which we do as little as possible to exhaust the child with our surveillance and instruction. However much the environment corresponds to the needs of the child, by so much will our roles as teachers be limited." (*The Child in the Family*, 27)

➤ *The child perfects himself and causes the adult to want to perfect the environment for him.*

It is vital to the child to have an environment that is pristine. Dr. Montessori tries to describe to us the significance, trying to convince us that the need for order is much more than it may seem. It is as harmful to the spiritual embryo as chemicals would be to the physical embryo.

“It is a vital need at a certain age, in which disorder is painful and is felt as a wound in the depths of the soul, so that the child might say, ‘I cannot live unless I have order about me.’ It is indeed a question of life and death.” (*Secret of Childhood*, Orient Longman 1995, p 52)

➤ *The child makes us more clear and precise.*

Analysis, precision, clarity, and exactness are essential so that the child has a motive and urge to order his own movements. Knowing how to use the materials includes understanding its purpose. This also means that we have understood the points that will lead to success, so that our movements call the child’s attention to try something in a whole new way.

“It is just as if we were standing on the edge of a lake, looking without much attention at the shore, when suddenly an artist came up and exclaimed, ‘What a beautiful curve the shore makes in the shadow of that cliff!’ Then that hitherto dull scene comes to life within our minds, just as if it had been illuminated by a ray of the sun, and we experience the joy of fully appreciating what we had only imperfectly felt before. This is our mission: to cast a ray of light and pass on... This then is the first duty of an educator: to stir up life, but leave it free to develop.” (*Discovery of the Child*, Clio 113)

➤ *The child requires that we be dynamic.*

[for example, the 5 P’s: purpose, punchline or points of interest, prerequisites, parallels, progressions]

Dr. Montessori carefully offers the idea of seduction. Our task is to entice the child so as to “fan the flame of interest”.

“Our care of the child should be governed not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.” (*Spontaneous Activity in Education*, Clio, 185)

We must personally love each material and present it as though it is the first time, no matter how many years we have been involved in this work. Our aim is to present so as to offer keys that enable the child to discover. This means that we are fascinated, intrigued, and animated, so that we convey this to the child. Think about what aspect of the world has been materialized for the child so that in a tangible way, she can experience this facet. Our **presentation** should allow for pondering and perturbation by the child. The gift of offering the outer world is such that it calls to the child’s inner world.

“If the teacher cannot recognize the difference between pure impulse, and the spontaneous energies which spring to life in a tranquilized spirit then her action will bear no fruit. ... Only when the teacher has learned to discriminate can she become an observer and a guide.” (*The Absorbent Mind* Oxford 264-265)

➤ *The child requires that we expand our knowledge of human nature.*

Timing is everything. In addition to knowing how to use the materials, it is essential that we know when they should be offered. Effortless learning is the result of serving the Sensitive Periods; we see what attracts the child and respond by providing the right stimulus for his activity.

“Knowledge can best be given where there is eagerness to learn, so this is the period when the seed of everything can be sown, the child’s mind being like a fertile field, ready to receive what will germinate into culture.” (*To Educate the Human Potential*, Cleo, England 1989, p 3)

As a sensorial *explorer*, the child needs experiences that involve direct *manipulation* with the physical world. He thrives in an environment that has *order*, and his work is to constantly create

order, which become permanent classifications by which he develops a logical well-ordered mind. He needs to *communicate*, to *orient*, to *repeat*, to be *active* so that he can *self-perfect*. No one can do this for him. We must continue to ask ourselves if we are activating the child's **tendencies**. Are we providing opportunities for the child to search, to explore, to investigate, to be curious, to make discoveries, to repeat those discoveries, and then to share them with others? How do we see this? Are we observing so that we notice whether we are diminishing or expanding opportunities? *The child makes us ask these great questions.*

➤ *The child causes us to reflect on reflection.*

Remember the last stage of concentration. This includes the understanding that following the child's main work, there will be a period of contemplation. In the child's refreshed state, there is a quiet satisfaction from the previous efforts that had been inspired by interest. On our parts, it is therefore extremely important to allow for this pondering, respecting the process, the closure, the private joy that only can occur after deep concentration.

On a similar note, as we contemplate what it means to have the gift of the **Absorbent Mind**, we must respect how much learning the child is doing just by *being* in the environment. This does not always mean that the child is manipulating an object, but is just observing what others are doing. How often have we seen a child go to a material, without a "formal" lesson, and know the progression, sequence, etc.? The child luckily is immersed in an environment of a large population of 25-35 other children, and so she is receiving lessons all the time, even at a distance, indirectly.

I was observing in a Children's House, and saw a child, very new to the environment, take out the pitcher and bucket from the tablewashing exercise. Since he did not gather any of the other items, I guessed that he had not yet had a formal lesson with this material. He went to the sink, and filled the pitcher. He came back and poured the water into the bucket. He did this many times, until the bucket was full. When the water was level with the top of the bucket, he stopped adding more. At this point, he was still unnoticed by the adults in the environment. He then proceeded to squat down as 2 and ½ year olds do so well, and gently pushed the bucket about 3 inches. The water swayed from side to side, but not overflowing, and the child waited until it settled again. He then gave it another push, and again no water spilled. It took him 45 minutes to get to the drain, which had a little ledge around it. At this point, he went to get help from an adult, knowing that he was not able to lift the bucket over the ledge. I always ask, when I tell this story, at what point might any of us intervened, with good intentions, of course?

This means that we need to know when the child has understood enough to proceed, not with mastery, as this would indicate that the work did not offer any discovery for the child, but with autonomy.

"...the child should become the ever more active partner and the teacher more passive. Since her aim is to foster the child's independence, free choice, and spontaneous activity, she will be successful only in so far as this transference of roles takes place." (*Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work* New York: New American Library, 1984, p. 303)

"The teacher must be quiet and passive, waiting patiently and almost withdrawing herself from the scene, so as to efface her own personality and thus allow plenty of room for the child's spirit to expand." (*Absorbent Mind* Clio 240)

"Freedom reveals the capacity for that powerful spontaneous concentration which is the outward aspect of an inner development." (*Maria Montessori: Her Life and Her Work*, Plume, p. 281)

“So, whatever intelligent activity we chance to witness in a child – even if it seems absurd to us, or contrary to our wishes (provided of course that it does him no harm) – we must not interfere; for the child must always be able to finish the cycle of activity on which he has his heart set.” (*Absorbent Mind* Oxford 147)

➤ *The child beseeches us to protect his concentration.*

While giving a lesson, is the child getting our full attention? To truly attend to the child, we want to ensure that no one else is a distraction.

Throughout a three-hour work cycle, the child has the possibility of moving from short quick contact with many materials and passing through what Montessori termed “false fatigue” to actually finding that which truly engages him. This is only true if the class is not interrupted.

“When the child begins to show interest in one of these, the teacher must not interrupt, because this interest corresponds with natural laws and opens up a whole cycle of new activities. But the first step is so fragile, so delicate, that a touch can make it vanish again, like a soap bubble, and with it goes all the beauty of that moment.” (*Absorbent Mind* Oxford 225)

We want to create experiences where the child feels that he has all the time in the world, rather than be pressured by the impatience of others for the material he has chosen, or that soon it will be time to go to another part of the building for physical education, music, art, etc. The children anticipate these schedules, and lose the ability to just be in the present, unconcerned with time. We see how children are preoccupied as a holiday approaches, or on a day where photographs are taken. Modern thinkers such as Jane Healy remind us of what Montessori also said, which is that interruptions are short-circuiting rather than creating permanent strong neural pathways in the brain.

➤ *The child contributes to our spiritual life.*

This is the hardest part of our work. Where do we begin? When are we done? In the past months, I have attended several funerals. It has struck me that we are currently writing our own eulogies, every day that we are alive. Although we will not be present to our own memorial services, we have the opportunity to ask ourselves every day, “How will I be remembered?”

I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel. (Maya Angelou)

My husband has told me that he wants his epitaph to be: “I love to laugh.” We each have our own cosmic mission, to better the planet in some kind of way. To be in service to life, we ask ourselves at night if that particular day has been lived in a way that is graceful, honorable, kind, respectful, and responsible. For those who have encountered the challenge of overcoming a disease or an injury, there is often a mindful prioritizing of what is important. It is with this consciousness that we no longer have the “luxury” of wasting time. We see time as an all too precious commodity, and we redefine our own purpose. I invite us each to give ourselves that kind of “wake up call” that allows us to be a part of a movement, a personal change, a proactive self-assessment that leads to self-acceptance first, and a life of generosity, authenticity and reciprocity.

How do we continue to nurture ourselves so that we grow our patience, expand our compassion, see everyday blessings, believe in what is possible, maintain the perspective that the glass is half-full rather than half-empty?

Several quotes that I’d like to share:

The greatest discovery of any generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering the attitudes of their minds. (Albert Schweitzer)

My barn having burned to the ground, I can now see the moon. (Old Taoist saying)

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights. (Maya Angelou)

There is a Peanuts cartoon where Linus is having a conversation with Charlie Brown. He says, "I think you're afraid to be happy, Charlie Brown. Don't you think happiness would be good for you?" Charlie replies, "I don't know....What are the side effects?"

You may have heard the story of the 2 children who met for the first time on a playground. Their mothers were sitting on the park bench watching them. The children were having a splendid time, but all of a sudden they started to have a disagreement. They told each other that they were no longer friends, and that they didn't like each other. Within minutes, they had come back together and were playing like old chums. One mother turned to the other and said, "I wonder why adults can't do that." The other replied, "Children seem to choose happiness over righteousness."

Do we live with that kind of caution, hesitation, doubt, and skepticism? Are we unwilling to take risks, or have life be unpredictable? We fool ourselves into thinking that we are in control of all that occurs. How much energy do we use up to try to do this? Have you experienced how freeing it is to let go, to free fall and surrender? How freeing it is to find humor and the deepest release from our bellies when we laugh?

He who laughs, lasts. (Mary Pettibone Poole)

Seven days without laughter makes one weak. (Joel Goodman)

Is it more important to be right than to be unified and together? When we come upon conflict, do we add to the problem, or do we find ways to make peace through active resolutions?

Anecdote 1: Child who puts on mittens before putting on her coat and therefore can't zip is scolded for this daily, as her fingers can't manipulate the tab and foot. When asked "why" she was doing this, she replied, "So the snow doesn't get up my sleeves."

Anecdote 2: Child who asks for help with a knot that he has made on the bow frame. The guide is not available and asks him to try to think of a solution until she can come join him. He returns to her to announce proudly that he did it. He thought of using scissors (like twine on a package) to cut off the knot.

Anecdote 3: Child who joyfully came to get his mother to show her his cursive writing that he did outside. She sees that he has taken a rock to the side of their new car and written, "I love Mommy."

Anecdote 4: From the essay, "Letter to My Mother" in the book Small Wonder (Barbara Kingsolver), p. 162 – vignette about gathering all the sweet peas, and the mother had the gracious strength to say "thank you" through her tears.

(Are we part of the problem or part of the solution? A quote from Helen Keller may offer another view:

"When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.")

Do we accept the status quo, or do we strive for excellence?

The child shows us how to remove all the roadblocks that we must overcome, if our goal is to be the best human beings serving humanity as our spiritual mission. And I say this is a collective effort.

The child demands that we in the Montessori village rally around the child. Sometimes each person is so isolated that she loses perspective, touchstones, or reminders of the path she means to follow. Coming to a conference, reading again the words of Maria Montessori, studying our albums, creating and contributing to focused staff meetings that combine practice with theory are some of the ways in which we can renew our beliefs, and realign ourselves. When our spirits are involved, we are aroused into action, which includes reflection, imagination, and the search for truth.

A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song to sing. (Maya Angelou)

➤ *The Child lends us a vision which liberates our spirit by teaching us to be creative and to love.*

"An ordinary teacher cannot be transformed into a Montessori teacher, but must be created anew, having rid herself of pedagogical prejudices. The first step is self-preparation of the imagination, for the Montessori teacher has to visualize a child who is not yet there, materially speaking, must have faith in the child who will reveal himself through work." (*Education for a New World* Kalakshetra Press, 1974, p 93)

➤ "The children are now working as if I did not exist." (*Absorbent Mind* Oxford 283) There is great humility in not needing to be needed, but the more successful we are in this manner, the more we have the privilege of witnessing levels of independence, which thus allows the child to self-construct, to fulfill tasks of his own formation.

"Justice...is to give every human being the help he needs to bring about his fullest spiritual stature, and service of the spirit at every age means helping those energies that are at work to bring this about." (*Absorbent Mind* Oxford 285)

➤ The adult learns about the art of loving, of building trust so that the child bonds with the adult. [Holocaust survivors who maintained emotional health had one loving relationship in their childhood.] She does this by being predictable and consistent in expectations and guidelines, and by gentle invitation so that intimacy develops through one-to-one interactions. In this intimacy, there is also a healthy detachment, so that the child does not feel expectation from the adult, but just a welcoming heart.

Our task is to keep alive the meaning of respect, which presupposes an acceptance of other human beings. Our adult natures begin to extend to all humans. Respect is a human right, regardless of age, class, gender or race. *The child teaches us respect.*

➤ *Children show us the way to human solidarity, even when they or we have made mistakes.*

Each of us needs courage so that mistakes are not experienced as stumbling blocks.

I heard a story about an 11-year old child who was working with his cello teacher. The child made several mistakes, and with resignation and a huge sigh put down his bow, saying he could not play the piece. His instructor laughed lovingly, and said, "After three minutes of practice, you are ready to quit?"

Don't we often expect to get things right, right from the start? Don't we hide our imperfections, hoping no one will find out that we are vulnerable? But how will we improve if we cannot face our immediate level of practice? To be truly growing, it means that we are stretching ourselves, taking ourselves beyond our comfort zones, and trying a new way, trying to go farther, deeper, or beyond where we have been. And this is really hard work.

“The best moments usually occur when a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile. Optimal experience is thus something that we *make* happen.Such experiences are not necessarily pleasant at the time they occur....But in the long run optimal experiences add up to a sense of mastery—or perhaps even better, a sense of *participation* in determining the content of life...” (*Flow* Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi NAMTA Summer 1991, “Happiness Revisited” pp. 71-72)

➤ ***What does it mean to be a practitioner anyway? Doesn’t practice imply that we are still developing?***

The maxim “follow the child” is at the core of our belief system, acknowledging that the child has what is necessary for her own growth. With this perspective, our role changes to the important task of educator in the truest sense: *educare* means to bring forth from within. This means we continuously need to suspend judgement, stay objective and avoid making assumptions. And if we are successful in this way, then we start to truly *see* the child, and ourselves at the same time.

It means that we put our best effort forward so as to avoid taking personally a child’s acting out. Instead we look to see what might be the cause, as we recognize that something is disturbing the child’s soul, and she needs our help to put order back into her world. If instead, we become defensive, every one loses. When our ego gets in the way, we are no longer objective and we actually become part of the problem.

Children have a remarkable talent for not taking the adult world with the kind of respect we are so confident it ought to be given. To the irritation of authority figures of all sorts, children expend considerable energy in “clowning around.” They refuse to appreciate the gravity of our monumental concerns, while we forget that if we were to become more like children our concerns might not be so monumental. (Conrad Hyers) [*lighten up!*]

The task of the adult is to continue to seek the stimulus for a transformation that nurtures a new vision of the child, and a new sense of mission to serve that developing human being. Dr. Montessori continued to point to the child. Dr. Montessori spoke these words in a culminating speech to her trainees:

“We have been together several months and we have become conscious of a bond uniting us, which has grown stronger and which I believe will never break. I am a pilgrim and you are pilgrims towards an idea. I voyage and you voyage and we unite ourselves together, almost as spiritual pilgrims, to work for the triumph of a principle which does not concern ourselves – but for the child for whom we are working and wish to work.

You and I have been, as it were, seduced by something attractive and deep in the child. Not only in those beautiful individual creatures whom we all love, but also in an almost *symbolic being*—one who holds in himself a secret, a secret we can never wholly fathom, and one which will therefore always attract us...we have come together in this way because we have touched a point which is common to all cultures, nations, societies, religions – the child.” (*Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work* 77)

To engage in this work is to feel our humanity and its spiritual dimension without hardly knowing that we are finding our way. The child’s mission is so gentle, we barely notice our search for meaning is contained by the purpose of the children’s journey. As Montessori pointed out so often, the child will lead the way.

I would like to end with the last 2 paragraphs of Education and Peace (pp. 142-3).

If children are the teachers of love, we need not go out and look for them. Let us remember that every family has children and that in every family this principle of love is therefore at work. When a child is born into a family, his mother becomes a more

beautiful woman and his father a better man; and if the child already creates this atmosphere of love simply by coming into this world, he then goes on to disclose those laws of growth that reveal the roots of human personality and human greatness to those who observe him carefully. The child possesses immeasurable abilities and unsuspected powers of intelligence. His heart is so sensitive to the need for justice that we must call him, as Emerson also did, “the Messiah who forever returns to dwell among fallen men, to lead them to the Kingdom of Heaven.”

We are convinced that the child can do a great deal for us, more than we can do for him. We adults are rigid. We remain in one place. But the child is all motion. He moves hither and thither to raise us far above the earth. Once I felt this impression very strongly, more deeply than ever before, and I took almost a vow to become a follower of the child as my teacher. Then I saw before me the figure of a child, as those close to me now see and understand him. We do not see him as almost everyone else does, as a helpless little creature lying with folded arms and outstretched body, in his weakness. **We see the figure of the child who stands before us with his arms held open, beckoning humanity to follow.**

Thank you.

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