

INVITATION PART FIVE MATTERING

If tough times are going to continue, does anything we do really matter anyway? I suppose if we asked Christ or Gandhi or Buddha or Lao Tsu or Tolstoy, Chief Joseph, Maya Angelou, Florence Nightengale, Harriet Tubman, Rachel Carson, Helen Keller, Mother Theresa, and countless other religious founders, peace activists and meaning makers, they would offer a resounding ‘yes, what you do matters.’

We are the first-line meaning-makers for the children. What we do with and for them now, in what I believe to be the first-ever worldwide re-set any of us have consciously experienced, can offer them a model of resiliency, strength, courage, trust, devotion, inner freedom, flexibility, patience, self-forgiveness, levity; and perhaps, if we slow down to a human pace, we can all experience a sense of spaciousness that has been absent for too long.

Decades ago when I was feeling stressed I sought the help of a curative eurythmist, a form of movement developed by Rudolf Steiner and Marie von Sievers. Jean, the eurythmist, gave me an exercise that had more to do with the inner movement of my soul. She encouraged me to breathe deeply and bring into my consciousness a lovely memory. It was very soothing and helped to bring me back into balance. It brings to mind something I read years ago about concentration camp survivors who survived partially due to the fact that they could momentarily lift themselves out of the hell they were living by bringing to mind fond memories from their earlier life.

This strange and unprecedented time we are living is offering us an opportunity to focus on memory-making. I’m not inferring we need to make good memories just so we, and our loved ones, can endure the hardships ahead. No, let’s create meaningful experiences during this time so that when we begin to move back into community life, we will hang on to the values we are creating right now. Perhaps the joy of family engagement that had slipped away before this mandate to stay home came upon us, perhaps the realization that we do not need to rush, that there are things we were doing that we really do not need to do any more, and perhaps the awareness that human connection is more fulfilling, more nourishing, more soulful and more true than virtual entertainment.

Many who are familiar with Rudolf Steiner’s approach to education, known as Waldorf education in many parts of the world, may know this verse:

*Receive the children in reverence
Educate them in love
And send them forth in freedom*

What better time than now to lay claim to and practice whatever expands our sense of Spirit and the continuum of life and allow that to awaken a deepened feeling for reverence, to

look out into the world specifically with the goal to find something to admire and love each day, and then to claim the personal freedom that allows us to choose how we will respond to all that goes on around us.

When these three soul qualities (reverence, love and freedom), even in their smallest seed form, begin to take shape within us, we can further trust ourselves to stand before the children and say, "Here, let me show you the way."