

OUR CHILDREN, OUR FUTURE: LIVING ETHICS WITH CHILDREN

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There is an ancient legend from the East describing the *12 Petaled Lotus of the Heart*. The petals it describes are humility, service, patience, love, group love, tolerance, self-forgetfulness, compassion, sympathy, wisdom, sacrifice, and gratitude. Whether this legend can be verified or not, we all know the qualities of a loving heart when we see them. We know the qualities or the spirit of brotherhood when we find it.

The Platonists also wrote about the *12 Petaled Lotus of the Heart* and described these petals as virtues. The discussion of virtues has been with us since human societies were first formed in the early millennia of human history. In this book, we deal with virtues through role-modeling, the study of values and ideals, and through education. The Latin *virtus* was derived from the root of man (*vir*) and came to mean valor, merit, and moral excellence. Value also derives from the Latin *valere* meaning worth. So, we can define virtues as having great worth, and certainly, the merit of these studies should be evident to anyone interested in human flourishing. Appreciation of the virtues and understanding them as societal values can be enhanced through education. There are inspiring fields of study called values clarification and values education. To cultivate our young people into responsible and humanitarian citizens who can and will contribute to humanity, it is vital that we educate both the heart and the mind, that we educate the heart of the child, as well as their intellect, and that we unite values, ethics, and humanitarian concerns into our homes and schools.

The benefits of the application of values in daily life also helps the entire family and our society. Schools and communities begin to reflect values as they are assimilated by our children. Eventually, the face of our planet becomes changed as well. What an incredible power we are holding in our hands!

Chapter 2

The Values

Values are those magnetic visions that challenge human beings to climb toward a life more abundant, on higher and higher planes, in ever-expanding relationships.

Values are standards of achievements. Values are steps leading to enlightenment, joy, prosperity, freedom, unity.

Right attitude to values creates progressive changes in the seven departments of human endeavor: politics, education, philosophy and communication, art, science, religion, economics, and finance. Wrong response to values increases the suffering of the world. Values are pro-survival factors. They bring us success and victory.

As individuals change their lives through the power of values nations will change; humanity will change; and the transformation of the planet will be a fulfilled fact.

– Torkom Saraydarian
The Psyche and Psychism, pp. 890-1; 894

We can say that a civilization is built upon its values. Our daily lives reflect our values. In shaping human character, we come to see that quality education cannot exist without inculcating values. A thriving, productive family life is lived with the demonstration of positive and progressive values. Whether children are taught values directly or indirectly, they learn them. Mostly, they learn them through the example of adults but also, of course, from their peers. Far more than with our words, we teach children with our behavior and example. Ageless values and virtues, practiced with mindfulness serve purposefully in offering vital support to children and families. Today, most parents and educators are searching and researching for ways to develop healthy and happy children. The need for guidelines and techniques for raising healthy children via the cultivation of virtues becomes a necessity. The guidelines we offer will enable us to raise creative and productive citizens who eventually also find fulfillment as parents and teachers themselves.

What then is the first step? We adults are the ones who must apply these values and virtues to our children's lives and must do so as well in our own lives. Our behaviors can and must be congruent with our highest aspirations and visions. When we live our values, we enable our inner beliefs to match our outer behaviors. It is we who will demonstrate a life of integrity, giving, and love in action. Our children will then experience these aspirations naturally. It is only through the example of the adults around our children that they will be able to live the high values we espouse and teach to them. Our shared humanity, complete with our weaknesses and foibles, calls us to a life of vision, virtue, and principle. This then becomes the domain of *Living Ethics*.

We are compelled to design and support the improvement of our individual, family, and school lives into welcomed transformation. Through our efforts to learn, live and teach the values

that lead to a life of *Living Ethics*, we can ensure a radiant future for ourselves and for the children we love and serve. Our children will inherit what we give them. Our children become the legacy of our highest heartfelt aspirations. These values, upon which we continue to improve, strengthen, and uplift our human lives. Eventually we view our efforts as merely a continuum of the enhancement of human values derived from the very beginning of time!

These values affect the education of the world. Those who respond to these values are creating a new educational system that will lead the world into the world of values and guarantee its survival and creative expressions.

– Torkom Saraydarian
The Psyche and Psychism, p. 891

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