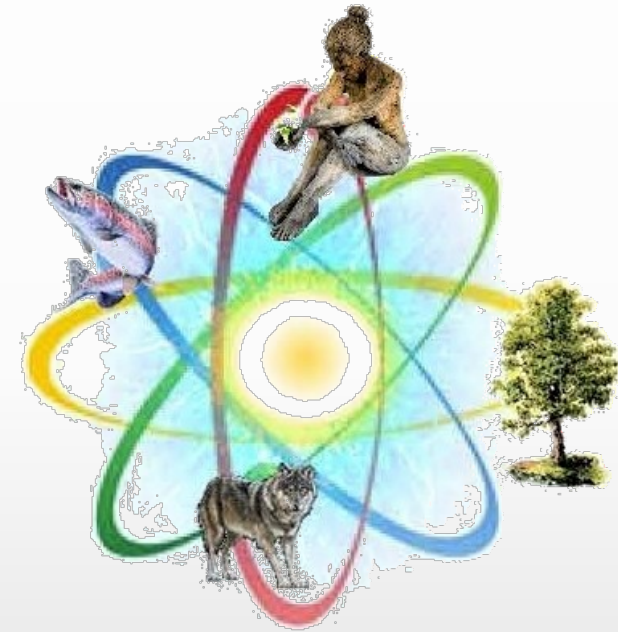


WHY is Teaching Contemplative Education so Crucial?



Spiritual Heritage Education Network
Session Three





Why Typical Education is Failing

The Universe, all matter, the world and all living things are part of an immense and undiscernible Truth.

Educational systems that are now in place try to define and educate with EASY and rational answers. Taking the easy way out continues to fail to transform people into a “wholeness” mindset that would unify the world.

Education should be transformative and empowering. Our Scientists, sages, seers, prophets, and philosophers have revealed the truth of an ultimate reality that underlies and unifies the diversity in the universe.

But most people have never been taught this concept. Of those who are aware, only a small percentage have absorbed it, and developed a personal experience to live their lives with the understanding of unity in diversity.

We believe that the time has now come for our houses of learning to take the lead in making us aware of the unseen Truth “as it is” and to teach systems of contemplative seeking and finding to form, re-form, and transform our being.

That is the purpose of this proposal.

The Science Behind Unconscious Living

As Shiv described, most people live in a state of “automatic responses”

- Survival instincts come first with no effort on our part
- Then Ego and desire for love and acceptance come next

The Analogy of a Horse–drawn wagon is perfect!

- *The WAGON is your life*
- *The DRIVER is your mind*
- *The HORSES are your instincts and ego.*



Your EGO controlling your life...VS...Your conscious awareness controlling your life



Contemplative Learning is Life Changing

Our natural instincts were given to the first humans to help us survive before we had knowledge or experience. Those instincts create barriers.

But today, there is no “official” teaching about how to grow from that instinctual automated life.

To EXPERIENCE life through full awareness is more crucial to wholeness than just basic knowledge or acceptance of facts.

BUT, the desire and purpose of wholeness MUST be as compelling as basic instinct for a person to be willing to make the effort.

The issue today is that people are not taught about “wholeness” and so they do not have a desire to learn about it.

This is where Traditional Education must be changed!



What Traditional Education is Missing

- **Traditional Education might address bullying** – *but has never taught compassion*
- **They might teach about prejudice** – *but have never taught unity or oneness of humankind*
- **Discussions about the environment are common** – *but explaining that all life is connected by “life energy” is not.*

In short, students are given the rational, but not the deep understanding of it!

Contemplation and being fully aware of life is the way to a fill those gaps.

But HOW do we teach Holistic Learning?

- *Teach about Social Ethics and Morality*
- *Teach focusing techniques*
- *Share ways to find peace through connection with nature*
- *Add games like chess to enhance skills of focus and deep thought*
- *Use Yogic Contemplation techniques as an experiential tool*



Social Ethics is More Needed than Ever

Social Ethics is not a topic that is addressed completely in education today.

Social Justice and equality are discussed: *but individual morality, ethics and honor are not discussed.* If individuals were moral, ethical and honorable these issues would take care of themselves!

Education discusses the WHAT...but never the HOW

Confucius (551BC) believed that “Social Ethics” was the key to peace and his contributions and philosophy has changed the world in many ways. He wanted to bring back the most successful and longest dynasty in China (1200 yrs) by bringing back the virtuous life.

“He who in this world can practice five things may indeed be considered man-at-his-best. Humility, magnanimity, sincerity, diligence, and graciousness. If you are humble, you will not be laughed at. If you are magnanimous, you will attract many to your side. If you are sincere, people will trust you. If you are gracious, you will get along well with your subordinates. It is this type of man who can transform society into the peaceful state it was meant to be.” -- Confucius

The sincere man in Confucius's eyes was the **man whose conduct was always based on the love of virtue**, and who in consequence sought to observe the rules of right conduct in his heart as well as in outward actions, when alone as well as in the presence of others. The nature of man, according to Confucius, is fundamentally good inclined towards goodness. Perfection of goodness can be found in sages and saints. Every man should attempt to reach the ideal by leading a virtuous life, by possessing a very noble character, and by doing his duty unselfishly with sincerity and truthfulness.



Case Studies of “Holistic Education”

Aside of the Philosophy of Confucianism, there are modern Examples of Educational systems that have been highly successful:

1793: Bildung (German: "education, formation, etc.") refers to the German tradition of self-cultivation (as related to the German for: creation, image, shape), wherein philosophy and education are linked in a manner that refers to a process of both personal and cultural maturation. This maturation is described as a harmonization of the individual's mind and heart and in a unification of selfhood and identity within the broader society. Bildung in contrast is seen as a process wherein an individual's spiritual and cultural sensibilities as well as life, personal and social skills are in process of continual expansion and growth. Bildung is seen as a way to become more free due to higher self-reflection.

Von Humboldt wrote: "Education, truth and virtue" must be disseminated to such an extent that the "concept of mankind" takes on a great and dignified form in each ... who must "absorb the great mass of material offered to him by the world around him, and by his inner existence, using all the possibilities of his receptiveness."

1810: Humboldt said: "To transform the world as much as possible into one's own person is, in the higher sense of the word, living'. To become a citizen of the world means, to deal with the big questions of humanity: *to seek peace, justice, and care about the exchange of cultures, other gender relationships or another relationship to nature.*" University education should not be job-focused, but educational training that is independent of economic interests.

The Humboldtian university concept profoundly influenced higher education throughout central, eastern, and northern Europe. In the 1960s, the Humboldtian model of the university attracted renewed interest and was discussed internationally.



Case Studies of “Holistic Education”

2016: Harvard Case Study “Ethics in the Classroom”

Case studies offer a safe way for educators to begin recognizing and discussing ethical dilemmas they may face in their own work, since no real person is implicated. “We hope that by reading and talking about the cases and commentaries, professional communities can become more practiced and comfortable in having these sorts of discussions, so that when their own particular dilemmas arise, they have the cases and a language to be able to speak about what it is they’re struggling with in their own practice,” says Fay.

The cases also **give educators a chance to consider (AKA CONTEMPLATE) diverse perspectives.** “Right now, our conversation in the United States about education policy and practice is so polarized, and so dismissive of the other side,” explains Levinson. “Both wrap themselves up in the mantle of social justice, and they refuse to recognize that in fact, both sides may really care deeply about equity, opportunity, and social justice, and just have different ways to try to achieve those goals.” **Because the cases, and especially the commentaries, delve into different viewpoints,** they may allow educators to better understand where the other side is coming from — and how to work with them.

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/16/04/ethics-classroom>

For some reason Harvard is aware that contemplating all sides is crucial...but we still are NOT teaching our student these skills of evaluation and contemplation!



The Art of Yogic Contemplation

After students learn basic skills and concentration games, then they can be taught to go to the next stage.

True Contemplation is the idea of intense focus on ONE topic or thing, without allowing other thoughts to sneak in.

It takes desire and practice, but it will accomplish many things, mentally, physically and intellectually:

- Reduce the “life distractions”
- Lower heart rate
- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce anxiety and increase peace
- Allows our “spiritual knowing” to come into our thoughts
- Allows complete experience of the “Now”



Mindfulness Studies Prove it Works!

2016 Forbes: “A Baltimore school that’s replaced the classic sit-in-your-seat-and-suffer detention with a more progressive and effective form: one where kids learn to meditate. One **2004** study found that children with ADHD who learned meditation with their parents twice weekly in a clinic setting, and kept practicing at home, **had better concentration at school, among other benefits.** Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for children (MBCT-C) has also been shown to help improve attention and behavior problems, and reduce anxiety in kids who started out with high anxiety levels. A study in **2013** showed that in boys with ADHD, an eight-week training in mindfulness, **significantly reduced hyperactive behaviors and improved concentration.**” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2016/10/18/the-many-benefits-of-meditation-for-children/#36892ee5dbe3>

2012 Exeter University: “Amongst adults there is reasonably strong evidence for the positive impact of mindfulness on a wide range of mental and physical health conditions. There is also good evidence from neuroscience and brain imaging that **mindfulness meditation reliably and profoundly alters the structure and function of the brain** to improve the quality of both thought and feeling. Research with children and young people is not yet as extensive as with adults. Nevertheless, work is growing rapidly and the results are promising which suggests that mindfulness in schools is well worth doing.

- Well conducted mindfulness interventions can improve the mental, emotional, social and physical health and well-being of young people who take part.
- Shown to reduce stress, anxiety, reactivity and bad behavior, improve sleep and self esteem, and bring about greater calmness, relaxation and emotions, self-awareness and empathy.
- Mindfulness can contribute directly to the development of cognitive and performance and executive function.” <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/MiSP-Research-Summary-2012.pdf>