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CHALLENGES ABOUND

Every endeavor has its challenges; transforming schools into person-centered environments certainly has its share. It is my hope that the challenges we undertake lead in a direction that will benefit millions of students, parents, teachers, and their communities

Creating a Dialogue

The first challenge is to establish a national dialogue on learning as a nation and as a democratic people, as proposed in chapter 17. This should be pursued with vigor and urgency. It may begin with letters to the editor or to elected representatives at local, state, and federal levels. It may start with a class project to create a dialogue on learning within a college, university, or school district. However you decide to begin, it cannot be left to someone else. If the other person is responsible, then no one is responsible. It must begin with you.

Listed here are a few questions that could get the dialogue started. I hope you thought about your list of questions. Do we have some overlap?

1. How can all children receive equal opportunities to learn when funding for education is unequal?
2. Should the investment in a child's public education be solely supported by property taxes?
3. How can our peacemaking rather than violence be the goal of schools and society?
4. Can the definitions of successful schools be expanded to go beyond test scores, grades, and athletics?
5. Should there be a moratorium on schools that are unhealthy for the academic or emotional well-being of students?
6. How can the cycle of youth's being either a witness, victim, or perpetrator of violence be broken?
7. Should resources be shifted from intervention to prevention for supporting children and families?
8. How can schools become more person-centered?
9. How can resources be directed away from the bureaucracy and into the classroom to benefit student learning?
10. What commitments will it take to make the nation's children the focus of our support?

As you can see, we have much to talk about. The list is only a beginning. Some of the issues are discussed in this book, but the dialogue needs to be broadened and sustained. There are reasonable solutions to most issues, but our nation is running out of time. It will require each of us to make education and the well-being of our youth our number one priority. The future of the nation and the leadership that will govern us in our twilight years are in our classrooms today. Based on the resources we have provided, what kind of world will they be able to build?

The dialogue between parents, teachers, students, and members of near and far communities should focus on what is right with schools that meet the needs of students. If we only look at what's wrong with learning, then we are in a constant state of repair rather than in a state of transformation. Positive examples of the Academy described by students, teachers, parents, administrators, and other citizens should be part of the dialogue.

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CHAPTER 8

THE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP IN THE FACILITATION OF LEARNING

This chapter is passionate and personal because it endeavors to probe my relationship to the learning process and the attitudinal climate that promotes this process. It has been presented in different forms at different times, the first at Harvard University (1, pp. 1-18). It has, however, been changed and revised for this volume. I believe that it expresses some of my deepest convictions in regard to the process we call *education*.

I wish to begin this chapter with a statement that may seem surprising to some and perhaps offensive to others. It is simply this: Teaching, in my estimation, is a vastly overrated function. Having made such a statement, I scurry to the dictionary to see if I really mean what I say. *Teaching* means "to instruct." Personally, I am not much interested in instructing another in what she should know or think, though others seem to love to do this. It also means "to impart knowledge or skill." My reaction is, why not be more efficient and use a book or programmed learning? Another meaning: "to make to know." Here my hackles rise. I have no wish to make anyone know something. "To show, guide, direct." As I see it, too many people have been shown, guided, directed. So I come to the conclusion that I do mean what I said. Teaching is, for me, a relatively unimportant and vastly over-valued activity.

But there is more in my attitude than this. I have a negative reaction to teaching. Why? I think it is because it raises all the wrong questions. As soon as we focus on teaching, the question arises, What shall we teach? What, from our superior vantage point, does the other person need to know? I wonder if, in this modern world, we are justified in the presumption that we are wise about the future and the young are foolish. Are we really sure as to what they should know? Then there is the ridiculous question of coverage. What shall the Course cover? This notion of coverage is based on the assumption that what is taught is what is learned; what is presented is what is assimilated. I know of no assumption so obviously untrue. One does not need extensive study to provide evidence that this is false. One needs only to talk with a few students.

But I ask myself, "Am I so prejudiced against teaching that I find no situation in which it is worthwhile?" I immediately think of my experiences in Australia long ago. I became much interested in the Australian aborigine, a group that for more than twenty thousand years has managed to live and exist in a desolate environment in which modern humans would perish within a few days. The secret of the aborigines' survival has been teaching. They have passed on to the young every shred of knowledge about how to find water, about how to track game, about how to kill the kangaroo, about how to find their way through the trackless desert. Such knowledge is conveyed to the young as being *the way* to behave, and any innovation is frowned upon. It is clear that teaching has provided aborigines with a way to survive in a hostile and relatively unchanging environment.

Now I am closer to the nub of the question that excites me. Teaching or the imparting of knowledge makes sense in an unchanging environment. This is why it has been an unquestioned function for centuries. But if there is one truth about us, it is that we live in an environment that is continually changing. It seems as we approach the start of a new century, that rapid change is our only constant. The one thing I can be sure of is that the physics taught to the present-day student will be outdated in five years or less. The teaching in psychology will certainly be out of date in ten years. The so-called facts of history depend very largely upon the current mood and temper of the culture. Chemistry, biology, genetics, and sociology are in such flux that a firm statement made today will almost certainly be modified by the time the student gets around to using the knowledge.

We are faced with an entirely new situation in which the goal of education, if we are to survive, is the facilitation of *change and* learning. The only person who is educated is the person who has learned how to learn; the person who has learned how to adapt and change; the person who has realized that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security. Changingness, a reliance on process rather than on static knowledge, is the only thing that makes any sense as a goal for education in the modern world.

So now with some relief I turn to an activity, a purpose, that really warms me - the facilitation of learning. When I have been able to transform a group - and here I mean all the members of a group, myself included - into a community of learners, then the excitement has been almost beyond belief. To free curiosity, to permit individuals to go charging off in new directions dictated by their own interests, to unleash the sense of inquiry, to open everything to questioning and exploration, to recognize that everything is in process of change - here is an experience I can never forget. I cannot always achieve it in groups with which I am associated, but when it is partially or largely achieved, then it becomes a never-to-be forgotten group experience. Out of such a context arise true students, real learners, creative scientists, scholars, and practitioners. From this flexible environment, then, comes the kind of individuals who can live in a delicate but ever-changing balance between what is presently known and the flowing, moving, altering problems and facts of the future.

Here, then, is a goal to which I can give myself wholeheartedly. I see the facilitation of learning and the aim of education as one process, the way in which we might develop the learner and the way in which we can learn to live as individuals. I see the facilitation of learning as the function that may hold constructive, tentative, changing process answers to some of the deepest perplexities that beset humankind today. But do we know how to achieve this new goal in education or is it a will-o'-the-wisp that sometimes occurs, sometimes fails to occur, and thus offers little real hope? My answer is that we possess a very considerable knowledge of the conditions that encourage a whole person's self-initiated, significant, experiential, gut level learning. We do not frequently see these conditions put into effect because they mean a real revolution in our approach to education and revolutions are not for the timid. But we do, as we have seen in the preceding chapters, find examples of this revolution in action. We know - and I will briefly mention some of the evidence - that the initiation of such learning rests not upon the teaching skills of the leader, not upon scholarly knowledge of the field, not upon curricular planning, not upon use of audiovisual aids, not upon the programmed learning used, not upon lectures and presentations, not upon an abundance of books, though each

of these might at one time or another be utilized as an important resource. No, the facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities that exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner. We came upon such findings first in the field of psychotherapy, but now there is strong evidence showing that these findings apply in the classroom as well. We find it easier to think that the intensive relationship between therapist and client might possess these qualities, but we are also finding that they may exist in the countless interpersonal interactions between teacher and pupils.

QUALITIES THAT FACILITATE LEARNING

What are these qualities, these attitudes, that facilitate learning? Let me describe them very briefly, drawing illustrations from the teaching field.

Realness in the Facilitator of Learning

Perhaps the most basic of these essential attitudes is *realness* or *genuineness*. When the facilitator is a real person, being what she is, entering into a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or a façade, she is much more likely to be effective. This means that the feelings that she is experiencing are available to her, available to her awareness, that she is able to live these feelings, be them, and be able to communicate them if appropriate. It means that she comes into a direct personal encounter with the learner, meeting her on a person-to-person basis. It means that the facilitator is being herself, not denying herself.

From this point of view, we see that the teacher can be a real person in her relationship with her students. She can be enthusiastic, bored, interested in students, angry, sensitive, and sympathetic. Because she accepts these feelings as her own, she has no need to impose them on her students. She can like or dislike a student product without implying that it is objectively good or bad or that the student is good or bad. She is simply expressing a feeling for the product, a feeling that exists within herself. Thus, she is a person to her students, not a faceless embodiment of a curricular requirement or a sterile tube through which knowledge is passed from one generation to the next. It is obvious that this attitudinal set, found to be effective in psychotherapy, is sharply in contrast with the tendency of most teachers to show themselves to their pupils simply in *roles*. It is quite customary for teachers rather consciously to put on the mask, the role, the façade of being a teacher and to wear this façade all day, removing it only when they have left the school at night.

But not all teachers are like this. Take Sylvia Ashton-Warner, who took resistant, supposedly slow-learning primary school Maori children in New Zealand and let them develop their own reading vocabulary. Each child could request one word each day—whatever word he wished - and she would print it on a card and give it to him. *Kiss, ghost, bomb, tiger, fight, love, daddy* - these are samples. Soon they were building sentences, which they could also keep. "He'll get a licking." "Pussy's frightened." The children simply never forgot these self-initiated learnings. But it is not my purpose to tell you of her methods. I want instead to give you a glimpse of her attitude, of the passionate

realness that must have been as evident to her tiny pupils as to her readers. An editor asked her some questions, and she responded: "A few cool facts you asked me for.... I don't know that there's a cool fact in me, or anything else cool for that matter, on this particular subject. I've got only hot long facts on the matter of Creative Teaching, scorching both the page and me" (2, p. 26).

Here is no sterile façade. Here is a vital person, with convictions, with feelings. It is her transparent realness that was, I am sure, one of the elements that made her an exciting facilitator of learning. She doesn't fit into some neat educational formula. She is, and students grow by being in contact with someone who really and openly is.

Take another very different person. Barbara Shiel, whose exciting work in facilitating learning in sixth graders has been described earlier. She gave her pupils a great deal of responsible freedom, and I will mention some of her students' reactions later. But here is an example of the way she shared herself with her pupils – not just sharing feelings of sweetness and light, but anger and frustration. She had made art materials freely available, and students often used these in creative ways, but the room frequently looked like a picture of chaos. Here is her report of her feelings and what she did with them.

I find it maddening to live with the mess - with a capital M! No one seems to care except me. Finally, one day I told the children ... that I am a neat, orderly person by nature and that the mess was driving me to distraction. Did they have a solution? It was suggested [that] there were some volunteers who could clean up.... I said it didn't seem fair to me to have the same people clean up all the time for others - but it would solve it for me. "Well, some people like to clean." they replied. So that's the way it is.
(3)

I hope this example puts some lively meaning into the phrases I used earlier, that the facilitator "is able to live these feelings, be them, and be able to communicate them if appropriate." I have chosen an example of negative feelings because I think it is more difficult for most of us to visualize what this would mean. In the previous instance, Barbara Shiel is taking the risk of being transparent in her angry frustrations about the mess. And what happens? The same thing that, in my experience, nearly always happens. These young people accept and respect her feelings, take them into account, and work out a novel solution that none of us, I believe, would have suggested. Ms. Shiel wisely comments, "I used to get upset and feel guilty when I became angry. I finally realized the children could accept my feelings too. And it is important for them to know when they've pushed me. I have my limits, too" (3).

Just to show that positive feelings, when they are real, are equally effective, let me quote briefly a college student's reaction, in a different course:

Your sense of humor in the class was cheering; we all felt relaxed because you showed us your human self not a mechanical teacher image. I feel as if I have more understanding and faith in my teachers now. I feel closer to the students too.

Another said:

You conducted the class on a personal level and therefore in my mind I was able to formulate a picture of you as a person and not as merely a walking textbook..

Another student in the same course said:

It wasn't as if there was a teacher in the class, but rather someone whom we could trust and identify as a sharer." You were so perceptive and sensitive to our thoughts, and this made it all the more "authentic "for me. It was an "authentic" experience, not just a class. (4)

I trust I am making it clear that to be real is not always easy, nor is it achieved all at once, but it is basic to the person who wants to become that revolutionary individual - a facilitator of learning.

Prizing, Acceptance, Trust

There is another attitude that stands out in those who are successful at facilitating learning. I have observed this attitude; I have experienced it. Yet it is hard to know what term to put to it, so I shall use several, I think of it as *prizing* the learner - prizing her feelings, her opinions, her person. It is caring for the learner, but nonpossessive caring. It is an acceptance of this other individual as a separate person who has worth in her own right. It is a basic trust - a belief that this other person is somehow fundamentally trustworthy. Whether we call it prizing, acceptance, trust, or some other term, it shows up in a variety of observable ways. The facilitator who has a considerable degree of this attitude can be fully acceptant of the fear and hesitation of the student as she approaches a new problem as well as acceptant of the pupil's satisfaction in achievement. Such a teacher can accept the student's occasional apathy, her erratic desires to explore byroads of knowledge, as well as her disciplined efforts to achieve major goals. The teacher can accept personal feelings that both disturb and promote learning: rivalry with a sibling, hatred of authority, concern about personal adequacy. What we are describing is a prizing of the learner as an imperfect human being with many feelings, many potentialities. The facilitator's prizing or acceptance of the learner is an operational expression of her essential confidence and trust in the capacity of the human organism.

I would like to give some examples of this attitude from the classroom situation. Here, in this context, any teacher statements would be properly suspect since many of us would like to feel we hold such attitudes and might have a biased perception of our qualities. But let me indicate how this attitude of prizing, of accepting, of trusting appears to the student who is fortunate enough to experience it. Here is a statement from a college student in a class with Dr. Morey Appell:

Your way of being with us is a revelation to me. In your class I feel important, mature, and capable of doing things on my own. I want to think for myself and this need cannot be accomplished through textbooks and lectures alone, but through

living. I think you see me as a person with real feelings and needs, an individual. What I say and do are significant expressions from me, and you recognize this. (5)

College students in a class with Dr. Patricia Bull describe not only these prizing, trusting attitudes, but the effect these attitudes have had on their other interactions.

I still feel close to you, as though there were some tacit understanding between us, almost a conspiracy. This adds to the inclass participation on my part because I feel that at least one person in the group will react, even when I am not sure of the others. It does not matter really whether your reaction is positive or negative, It just IS. Thank you.

I appreciate the respect and concern you have for others, including myself ... As a result of my experience in class, plus the influence of my readings, I sincerely believe that the student-centered teaching method does provide an ideal framework for learning; not just for the accumulation of facts, but more important, for learning about ourselves in relation to others.... When I think back to my shallow awareness in September compared to the depth of my insights now, I know that this course has offered me a learning experience of great value which I couldn't have acquired in any other way.

Very few teachers would attempt this method because they would feel that they would lose the students' respect. On the contrary. You gained our respect, through your ability to speak to us on our level, instead of ten miles above us. With the complete lack of communication we see in this school, it was a wonderful experience to see people listening to each other and really communicating on an adult, intelligent level. More classes should afford us this experience. (4)

These examples show the facilitator who cares, who prizes, who trusts the learner to create a climate for learning so different from the ordinary classroom that any resemblance is purely coincidental.

Empathic Understanding

A further element that establishes a climate for self-initiated, experiential learning is *empathic understanding*. When the teacher has the ability to understand the student's reactions from the inside, has a sensitive awareness of the way the process of education and learning seems to the student, then again the likelihood of significant learning is increased. This kind of understanding is sharply different from the usual evaluative understanding, which follows the pattern "I understand what is wrong with you." When there is a sensitive empathy, however, the reaction in the learner follows something of this pattern: "At last someone understands how it feels and seems to be me without wanting to analyze me or judge me. Now I can blossom and grow and learn." This attitude of standing in the other's shoes, of viewing the world through the student's eyes, is almost unheard of in the classroom. One could listen to thousands of ordinary classroom interactions without coming across one instance of clearly communicated,

sensitively accurate, empathic understanding. But it has a tremendously releasing effect when it occurs.

Let me take an illustration from Virginia Axline as she talks with a second-grade boy. Jay, age seven, had been aggressive, a troublemaker, slow of speech and learning. Because of his cussing, he was taken to the principal, who paddled him, unknown to Ms. Axline. During a free work period, Jay fashioned very carefully a man of clay, down to a hat and a handkerchief in his pocket. "Who is that?" asked Ms. Axline. "Dunno," replied Jay. "Maybe it is the principal. He has a handkerchief in his pocket like that." Jay glared at the clay figure. "Yes," he said. Then he began to tear the head off and looked up and smiled. Ms. Axline said, "You sometimes feel like twisting his head off, don't you? You get so mad at him." Jay tore off one arm, another, then beat the figure to a pulp with his fists. Another boy, with the perception of the young, explained, "Jay is mad at Mr. X because he licked him this noon." "Then you must feel lots better now," Ms. Axline commented. Jay grinned and began to rebuild Mr. X (6, pp. 521-33).

The other examples I have cited also indicate how deeply appreciative students feel when they are simply *understood* - *not evaluated*, not judged, but simply understood from their own point of view, not the teacher's. If any teacher set herself the task of endeavoring to make one nonevaluative, acceptant, empathic response per day to a student's demonstrated or verbalized feeling, I believe she would discover the potency of this currently almost nonexistent kind of understanding.

WHAT ARE THE BASES OF FACILITATIVE ATTITUDES?

A Puzzlement

It is natural that we do not always have the attitudes I have been describing. Some teachers raise the question, "But what if I am not feeling empathic, do not, at this moment, prize or accept or like my students. What then?" My response is that realness is the most important of the attitudes mentioned, and it is not accidental that this attitude was described first. So if one has little understanding of the students' inner world and a dislike for the students or their behavior, it is almost certainly more constructive to be real than to be pseudoempathic or to put on a façade of caring. But this is not nearly as simple as it sounds. To be genuine or honest or congruent or real means to be this way about *oneself*. I cannot be real about another because I do not *know* what is real for him. I can only tell, if I wish to be truly honest, what is going on in me.

Let me take an example. Earlier in this chapter I reported Ms. Shiel's feelings about the mess created by the artwork. Essentially she said, "I find it maddening to live with the mess! I'm neat and orderly and it is driving me to distraction." But suppose her feelings had come out somewhat differently, perhaps in the disguised way that is much more common in classrooms at all levels. She might have said, "You are the messiest children I've ever seen! You don't take care about tidiness or cleanliness. You are just terrible!" This is most definitely not an example of genuineness or realness, in the sense in which I am using these terms. There is a profound distinction between the two statements, which I should like to spell out.

In the second statement the teacher tells nothing of herself, shares none of her feelings. Doubtless the children will sense that she is angry, but because children are perceptively shrewd, they may be uncertain about whether she is angry at them or has just come from an argument with the principal. It has none of the honesty of the first statement in which she tells of her own upsetness, of her own feeling of being driven to distraction.

Another aspect of the second statement is that it is made up of judgments or evaluations, and like most judgments, they are all arguable. Are these children messy, or are they simply excited and involved in what they are doing? Are they all messy, or are some as disturbed by the chaos as she? Do they care nothing about tidiness, or is it simply that they don't care about it every day? If a group of visitors was coming, would the children's attitude be different? Are the students terrible, or simply children? I trust it is evident that when we make judgments, they are almost never fully accurate and hence cause resentment and anger as well as guilt and apprehension. Had she used the second statement, the response of the class would have been entirely different.

I am going to some lengths to clarify this point because I have found from experience that to stress the value of being real, of being one's feelings, is taken by some as a license to pass judgments on others, to project on others all the feelings that one should be *owning*. Nothing could be further from my meaning. Actually the achievement of realness is most difficult; and even when one wishes to be truly genuine, it occurs but rarely. Certainly it is not simply a matter of the words used. If one is feeling judgmental, the use of a verbal formula that sounds like the sharing of feelings will not help. It is just another instance of a façade, of a lack of genuineness. Only slowly can we learn to be truly real. For first of all, one must be close to one's feelings, capable of being aware of them. Then one must be willing to take the risk of sharing them as they are, inside, not disguising them as judgments or attributing them to other people. This is why I so admire Ms. Shiel's sharing of her anger and frustration without in any way disguising it.

Trust in the Human Organism

It is most unlikely that one could hold the three attitudes I have described, or could commit herself to being a facilitator of learning, unless she has come to have a profound trust in the human organism and its potentialities. If I distrust the human being, then I must cram her with information of my own choosing lest she go her own mistaken way. But if I trust the capacity of the human individual for developing her own potentiality - then I can provide her with many opportunities and permit her to choose her own way and her own direction in her learning.

It is clear, I believe, that the teachers and principals whose works are described in the preceding chapters rely basically upon the tendency toward fulfillment, toward actualization, in their students. They are basing their work on the hypothesis that students who are in real contact with problems that are relevant to them wish to learn, want to grow, seek to discover, endeavor to master, desire to create, move toward self-discipline. The teacher is attempting to develop a quality of climate in the classroom and a quality of personal relationship with students that will permit these natural tendencies to come to their fruition.

Living the Uncertainty of Discovery

I believe it should be said that this basically confident view of the human being and the attitudes toward students that I have described do not appear suddenly, in some miraculous manner, in the facilitator of learning. Instead, they come about through taking risks, through acting on tentative hypotheses. This is most obvious in the chapter describing Ms. Shiel's work where, acting on hypotheses of which she is unsure, risking herself uncertainly in new ways of relating to her students, she finds these new views confirmed by what happens in her class. The same is definitely true of Ms. Swenson in her foreign-language class. I am sure the other teachers we have discussed went through the same type of uncertainty. As for me, I can only state that I started my career with the firm view that individuals must be manipulated for their own good; I only came to the attitudes I have described and the trust in the individual that is implicit in them because I found that these attitudes were so much more potent in producing learning and constructive change. Hence, I believe that it is only by risking herself in these new ways that the teacher can discover, for herself, whether or not these attitudes of implicit trust in students are effective, whether or not they are for her.

I will, then, draw a conclusion, based on the experiences of the several facilitators and their students who have been included in this book so far: when a facilitator creates, even to a modest degree, a classroom climate characterized by all that she can achieve of realness, prizing, and empathy; when she trusts the constructive tendency of the individual and the group; then she discovers that she has inaugurated an educational revolution. Learning of a different quality occurs, proceeding at a different pace with a greater degree of pervasiveness. Feelings - positive, negative, confused - become a part of the classroom experience. Learning becomes life and a very vital life at that. Students are on the way, sometimes excitedly, sometimes reluctantly, to becoming learning, changing people.

The Research Evidence

The research evidence for the statements in the previous paragraph is now very convincing indeed. It has been most interesting to watch that evidence accumulate to a point where it seems irrefutable.

In the 1960s several studies in psychotherapy and education led to some tentative conclusions. Let me summarize them briefly, without presenting the methods used. (To learn more, consult the references at the end of the chapter.) When clients in therapy rated their therapists as high in genuineness, prizing, and empathic understanding, self-learning and therapeutic change were facilitated. The significance of these therapist attitudes was supported in classic research by G. T. Barrett-Lennard (7).

Another study focused on teachers. Some teachers saw their urgent problems as "helping children think for themselves and be independent," "getting students to participate," etc. These teachers were regarded as the 11 "positively oriented" group. Other teachers saw their urgent problems as "getting students to listen." "trying to teach children who don't even have the ability to learn," etc. These teachers were termed the negatively oriented group. Research found that students perceived the first group as

exhibiting far more empathy, prizing, and realness than shown by the second group. The first group showed a high degree of facilitative attitudes; the second did not (8).

A study by R. Schmuck showed that when teachers are empathically understanding, their students tend to like each other better (9). In an understanding classroom climate, every student tends to feel liked by all the others and has a more positive attitude toward self and school. This ripple aspect of the teacher's attitude is provocative and significant. To extend an empathic understanding to students has effects that go on and on.

The foregoing are samples of studies that are beginning to provide clear directions for healthy learning environments. But we may still ask, Does the student actually learn more when these attitudes are present? Back in 1965 David Aspy did a careful study of six classes of third graders (10). He found that in the three classes where the teachers' facilitative attitudes were highest, the pupils showed a significantly greater gain in their reading achievement than those in classes with a lesser degree of these qualities. Aspy and a colleague, Flora Roebuck, later enlarged this research into a program that extended for more than a decade. The overwhelming evidence that they accumulated is presented in a later section of this book, "What Are the Facts?" Their study makes it very clear that the attitudinal climate of the classroom, as created by the teacher, is a major factor in promoting or inhibiting learning.

In the 1990s, Wayne Hoy, John Tarter, and Robert Kottkamp synthesized a thirty-year period of research on school health and climate in the book *Open Schools/Healthy Schools* (11). They conclude, in part, that 59 percent of the reason for student learning can be attributed to the health of the school. Healthy schools have a very strong sense of partnership and community among all their members. "Teacher affiliation, a key mechanism for integrating school life, is the friendliness and commitment of the teachers to the school, colleagues, and students that make a school community... The healthy school has no need to coerce cooperation: it is given freely by professionals" (11, p. 194).

Evidence from Students

Certainly before the research evidence was in, students were making it clear by their reactions to student - centered or person-centered classrooms that an educational revolution was underway. This kind of evidence persists to the present day. The most striking learnings of students exposed to such a climate are by no means restricted to greater achievement in the three R's. The significant learnings are the more personal ones: independence, self initiated and responsible learning, release of creativity, a tendency to become more of a person. I can only illustrate this by choosing, almost at random, statements from students whose teachers have endeavored to create a climate of trust, of prizing, of realness, of understanding, and, above all, of freedom.

Again I quote from Sylvia Ashton-Warner about one of the central effect, of such a climate: "The drive is no longer the teacher's, but the children's own.... the teacher is at last with the stream and not against it, the stream of children's inexorable creativeness" (2, p. 93). If you need verification of this, here is one of a number of statements made by students in a course of poetry led (not taught) by Dr. Samuel Moon:

In retrospect, I find that I have actually enjoyed this course, both as a class and as an experiment, although it had me quite unsettled at times. This, in itself made the course worthwhile since the majority of my courses this semester merely had me

bored with them and the whole process of "higher education." Quite aside from anything else, due mostly to this course, I found myself devoting more time to writing poetry than to writing short stories, which temporarily interfered with my writing class.

I should like to point out one very definite thing which I have gained from the course; this is an increased readiness on my part to listen to and to seriously consider the opinions of my fellow students. In view of my past attitude, this alone makes the course valuable. I suppose the real result of any course can be expressed in answer to the question, "Would you take it over again?" My answer would be an unqualified "Yes." (12, p. 227).

This course is proving to be a vital and profound experience for me. This unique learning situation is giving me a whole new conception of just what learning is.... I am experiencing a real growth in this atmosphere of constructive freedom.... the whole experience is challenging.

I feel that the course had been of great value to me.... I'm glad to have had this experience because it has made me think.... I've never been so personally involved with a course before, especially outside the classroom. It has been frustrating, rewarding, enjoyable, and tiring!

The other comments are from the end of the course:

This course is not ending with the close of the semester for me, but continuing.... I don't know of any greater benefit which can be gained from a course than this desire for further knowledge.

I feel as though this type of class situation has stimulated me more in making me realize where my responsibilities lie, especially as far as doing required work on my own. I no longer feel as though a test date is the criterion for reading a book. I feel as though my future work will be done for what I will get out of it, not just for a test mark.

I think that now I am acutely aware of the breakdown in communications that does exist in our society from seeing what happened in our class.... I've grown immensely. I know that I am a different person than I was when I came into that class.... It has done a great deal in helping me understand myself better... thank you for contributing to my growth.

My idea of education has been to gain information from the teacher by attending lectures. The emphasis and focus were on the teacher... One of the biggest changes that I experienced in this class was my outlook on education. Learning is something more than a grade on a report card. No one can measure what you have learned because it's a personal thing. I was very confused between learning and memorization. I could memorize very well, but I doubt if I ever learned as much as I

could have. I believe my attitude toward learning has changed from a grade-centered outlook to a more personal one.

If you wish to know what this type of course seems like to a sixth grader, let me give you a sampling of the reactions of Ms. Shiel's youngsters - misspellings and all.

I feel that I am learning self abilty [sic]. I am learning not only school work but I am learning that you can learn on your own as well as someone can teach you.

I like this plan because there is a lot of freedom. I also learn more this way than the other way you don't have to wate [sic] for others you can go at your own speed rate it also takes a lot of responsibility. (3)

Or let me take two more, from Dr. Appell's graduate class:

I have been thinking about what happened through this experience. The only conclusion I come to is that if I try to measure what is going on, or what I was at the beginning, I have got to know what I was when I started - and I don't ... so many things I did and feel are just lost ... scrambled up inside.... They don't seem to come out in a nice little pattern or organization I can say or write.... There are so many things left unsaid. I know I have only scratched the surface, I guess. I can feel so many things almost ready to come out.... maybe that's enough.

It seems all kinds of things have so much more meaning now than ever before.... This experience has had meaning, has done things to me and I am not sure how much or how far just yet. I think I am going to be a better me in the fall. That's one thing I think I am sure of. (13, pp. 143-48)

You follow no plan, yet I'm learning. Since the term began I seem to feel more alive, more real to myself. I enjoy being alone as well as with other people. My relationships with children and other adults are becoming more emotional and involved. Eating an orange last week, I peeled the skin off each separate orange section and liked it better with the transparent shell off. It was juicier and fresher tasting that way. I began to think, that's how I feel sometimes, without a transparent wall around me, really communicating my feelings. I feel that I'm growing, how much, I don't know. I'm thinking, considering, pondering and learning. (5)

I can't read these student statements - sixth grade, college, graduate level - without being deeply moved. Here are teachers, *changing* themselves, *being* themselves, *trusting* their students, adventuring into the existential unknown, taking the subjective leap. And what happens? Exciting, incredible *human* events. You can sense persons being created, learnings being initiated, future citizens rising to meet the challenge of unknown worlds. If only one teacher out of one hundred dared to risk, dared to be, dared to trust, dared to understand, we would have an infusion of a living spirit into education that would, in my estimation, be priceless.

The Effect on the Instructor

Let me turn to another dimension that excites me. I have spoken of the effect upon the student of a climate that encourages significant, self-reliant, personal learning. But I have said nothing about the reciprocal effect upon the instructor. When she has been the agent for the release of such self-initiated learning, the faculty member finds herself changed as well as her students. One teacher says:

To say that I am overwhelmed by what happened only faintly reflects my feelings. I have taught for many years but I have never experienced anything remotely resembling what occurred. I, for my part, never found in a classroom so much of the whole person coming forth, so deeply involved, so deeply stirred. Further, I question if in the traditional setup, with its emphasis on subject matter, examinations, grades, there is, or there can be, a place for the "becoming" person with his deep and manifold needs as he struggles to fulfill himself But this is going far afield. I can only report to you what happened and to say that I am grateful and that I am also humbled by the experience. I would like you to know this for it has enriched my life and being. (14. p. 313)

Another faculty member reports:

Rogers has said that relationships conducted on these assumptions mean "turning present day education upside down." I have found this to be true as I have tried to implement this way of living with students. The experiences I have had have plunged me into relationships which have been significant and challenging and beyond compare for me. They have inspired me and stimulated me and left me at times shaken and awed with their consequences for both me and the students. They have led me to the fact of what I can only call ... the tragedy of education in our time-student after student who reports this to be his first experience with total trust, with freedom to be and to move in ways most consistent for the enhancement and maintenance of the core of dignity which somehow has survived humiliation, distortion, and corrosive cynicism. (5)

TOO IDEALISTIC?

Some readers may feel that the whole approach of this chapter - the belief that teachers can relate as persons to their students - is hopelessly unrealistic and idealistic. They may see that in essence it is encouraging both teachers and students to be creative in their relationship to each other and in their relationship to subject matter, and feel that such a goal is quite impossible. They are not alone in this. I have heard scientists at leading schools of science and scholars in leading universities argue that it is absurd to try to encourage all students to be creative - we need hosts of mediocre technicians and workers, and if a few creative scientists and artists and leaders emerge, that will be enough.

That may be enough for them. It may be enough to suit you. I want to go on record as saying it is not enough to suit me. When I realize the incredible potential in every student, I want to try to release it. We are working hard to release the incredible energy in the atom and the nucleus of the atom. If we do not devote equal energy - yes, and equal money - to the release of the potential of the individual person, then the enormous discrepancy between our level of physical energy resources and human energy resources will doom us to a deserved and universal destruction.

I'm sorry I can't be coolly detached about this. The issue is too urgent. I can only be passionate in my statement that people count, that interpersonal relationships *are* important, that we know something about releasing human potential, that we could learn much more, and that unless we give strong positive attention to the human interpersonal side of our educational dilemma, our civilization is on its way down the drain. Better courses, better curricula, better coverage, better teaching machines will never resolve our dilemma in a basic way. Only persons acting like persons in their relationships with their students can even begin to make a dent on this most urgent problem of modern education.

SUMMARY

Let me try to restate, somewhat more calmly and soberly, what I have said with such feeling and passion. I have said that it is most unfortunate that educators and the public think about, and focus on, *teaching*. It leads them into a host of questions that are either irrelevant or absurd so far as real education is concerned. I have said that if we focus on the facilitation of *learning* - how, why, and when the student learns and how learning seems and feels from the inside - we might be on a much more profitable track. I have said that we have some knowledge, and could gain more, about the conditions that facilitate learning, and that one of the most important of these conditions is the attitudinal quality of the interpersonal relationship between facilitator and learner.

Those attitudes that appear effective in promoting learning can be described. First of all, is a transparent realness in the facilitator, a willingness to be a person, to be and live the feelings and thoughts of the moment. When this realness includes a prizing, a caring, a trust, and a respect for the learner, the climate for learning is enhanced. When it includes a sensitive and accurate empathic listening, then indeed a freeing climate, stimulative of self-initiated learning and growth, exists. The student is *trusted* to develop. I have tried to make plain that individuals who hold such attitudes, and are bold enough to act on them, do not simply modify classroom methods; they revolutionize them. These bold individuals perform almost none of the functions of teachers. It is no longer accurate to call them teachers. They are catalyzers, facilitators, energizers; they give students freedom and life and the opportunity to learn. Most important, they are co-learners with students.

I have brought in the cumulative research evidence that suggests that individuals who hold such attitudes are regarded as effective in the classroom; that the problems that concern them have to do with the release of potential, not the deficiencies of their students; that they seem to create classroom situations in which children are disliked and not admired, but in which affection and liking are a part of the life of every child; that in classrooms approaching such a psychological climate, children learn more of the

conventional subjects. But I have intentionally gone beyond the empirical findings to try to take you into the inner life of the student - elementary, college, and graduate - who is fortunate enough to live and learn in such an interpersonal relationship with a facilitator, in order to let you see what learning feels like when it is free, self-initiated, and spontaneous. I have tried to indicate how it even changes the student-student relationship, making it more aware, more caring, more sensitive, as well as increasing the self-related learning of significant material. I have spoken of the change it brings about in the faculty member.

Throughout, I have tried to indicate that if we are to have citizens who can live constructively in this kaleidoscopically changing world, we must free our children to become self-starting, self-initiating learners. Finally, it has been my purpose to show that this kind of learner develops best, so far as we now know, in a growth-promoting, facilitative relationship with a *person*.

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