

Afterword

A Teacher's Journey

Throughout the Handbook we have championed the idea – one that is not always obvious, and even then, readily forgotten – that teaching is the most noble of all professions. Every great mother, saint, leader, reformer, scientist, politician and philosopher was inspired and guided by a teacher who looked within the child, captured their mind and heart, and set the forest ablaze.

Having been loved, recognised, infused and impelled towards their own inner light by their mentor and friend, no amount of obstacles, ostracism, failings and calamities could ever again deter these young souls from the grand destiny awaiting them.

It is for those teachers who are ready to embrace the challenge of aspiring in all humility towards nobility in their work that this book was written. Human Values Education is not a new method to be added to the several excellent ones that are leading the way in values/character education worldwide. Rather, it is an orientation, an attitude, a philosophy that will express itself in evolving ways.

It begins with the premise – attested to by the wise ones throughout history – that within every child, every human being, there is a treasure to be discovered, a fire waiting to be lit, a King or Queen who yearns to be awakened, and that this is the primary purpose of true education. This is not to say that the pursuit of academic excellence will be neglected – rather, it will be enhanced, because a happy, self-confident, self-motivated child with a peaceful mind and an open heart will learn better than one who feels alienated, self-doubting, easily distracted and unloved, to whatever degree.

The second premise is that the essential, and most effective, catalyst for prompting students to connect with their innate Human Values of Love, Peace, Truth, Right Conduct and Non-violence – that is, with their human excellence – is to have a teacher endeavouring to become an exemplary role model of the Values. This is the 'burning log' analogy, whereby newly-seasoned, unburnt pieces of wood will only release the latent fire within themselves when placed right next to a blazing log.

The third premise underlying Human Values Education is that the ideal conditions for this educational alchemy to take place is where every aspect of the school's curriculum, administrative structure, teaching strategies, environment and parental and community

involvement is permeated with, referred to, and defined by humankind's most valuable and noble virtues. Ideally all aspects of the five Human Values will come to sanctify every relationship in the school and sweeten the language between students and in their dialogues with teachers.

Schools practising Human Values Education will undoubtedly be engaged in selfless service to the community; they will enjoin parents to become part of their children's awakening to their human excellence, setting a good example themselves; and each child will feel free and encouraged to pursue their own spiritual path, in an atmosphere of the unity of all Faiths and the celebration of every culture in the school.

We trust that the material and language used in this *Handbook for Teachers in Human Values Education* will be of great help and inspiration to all who chance upon its pages.

We honour the untold beauty, love and wisdom in all.

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November 2015