

Through the Eye of the Needle
Notes on Three Lectures by Felicitas Vogt
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Introduction

At the beginning of each of the talks I will share a poem written by Kristina, a sixteen-year-old German girl. This girl, neglected and unable to follow the goals of a normal public school, is in the tenth grade of a special needs school. Her class teacher has given her heart to support her students, and there being no tests, the child is free to be a human being. The teacher asks: "What is the human being?" This poem is the girl's response.

What is the Human Being?

Complete security.

Then, a light — a glaring, it pierces:

Cold walls, a cry — I, the human being, am here.

A machine of flesh and blood,

Living from movement, a sense of time, and feeling.

Wonder at the supernatural,

The pollution of nature, part of the masses.

Part of the group pressure

On the search for the I.

Live your I and you are free.

Love your world, and you will be carried

By the circulating stream of love,

For love is life.

Cry out your longing, cry hot tears

And you will be free.

Friday Evening

"How do we go through the eye of the needle to find new forms when the old ways no longer hold us and something new must be born?"

When we look around at our time — at the pressures, the attacks on our lives — we can speak of a number of wounds that are increasingly prominent in our everyday life. The first wound results from the *decrease in the power of old social forms*. We long for encounter with others; we yearn for communication. Yet instead we increase our social isolation and aggression against one

another. We live in war against each other. It is strenuous to break through this isolation, to really meet the other human being.

It is a consolation to read Rudolf Steiner, for he suggests that this phenomenon, the fact that it is more and more difficult to meet the other soul in one's own inner being, belongs to the development of the consciousness soul. This process is a general irritation today. We feel the old forces decreasing as the power of past social settings and securities is lost, and the new inner forces are not yet there in full strength.

Every day we experience the struggle to become an independent ego, a human being standing on our own feet. And it seems to become even harder to fight against all that would hinder us from standing upright. We — and children too — even fight against help, because help can make us dependent upon the helper. We somehow know that we must stand alone. This has the effect of producing the well-known quality of social and societal autism.

The second wound that we live with today is the combination of *lack of self-esteem* and *workaholicism*. In Europe, in 1999, there was a very large conference of psychotherapists and psychologists, which began with this statement: Over eighty percent of people living in Europe suffer from a lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. This is an important statement. Social conflicts arise when I don't have self-esteem. I need to be seen as a good person, so I criticize others to feel good about myself. Look at modern advertising: "Treat yourself to something good." "Indulge yourself." The message is: I am worth it; I should use this perfume. Coming out of this lack of self-esteem, we have more and more workaholics. When I work and work and work, I feel I have the right to live, that I am worthy of living.

What do these characteristics do inside of us individually? Due to lack of self-esteem we start to wear masks, images of ourselves, which must always be positive — or always negative, as in "I can't do anything right." Of course, these masks are not true images, but as we identify with them, we — suffering, weak, joyful, grateful individuals — cease to know who we really are. This produces vast distances between us and other individuals.

The third wound is that of *fixed ideas and perceptions*. In our living from morning to night we have a fixed perception of how reality has to be — how a Waldorf kindergarten program, for instance, *has to be*. These rigid ideas hold us, for when I am fixed I don't have to be as flexible as the situation demands of me. These hardened perceptions are a kind of poison.

Our fourth wound is *instant judgment*. By practicing instant judgments without having taken in what is being talked about, we are led in a vicious circle back to fixed perception.

We create our fifth wound by *blaming others* and *blaming circumstances*. In our time we all suffer on a social level and it is a great temptation to blame others for the situation. We blame the circumstances. We develop this blaming as a coping mechanism, but it is an illusion.

The sixth wound in our modern life is *reliance on group opinions*. Standing on our own feet is a strenuous exercise that must be practiced every day. It is easy to relax this effort, and we sometimes like to fall back into group opinions. We must find our own opinions. Individualized Anthroposophy is the only thing that will carry us into the next millennium. It is not enough to rely on the Anthroposophy we read in lectures. We have to work through it individually.

Our seventh wound is that of *materialism*. In the insecurity of our times, we are tempted to bolster our dignity by surrounding ourselves with material things. Many people build themselves

up with products. The thinking, feeling, and willing of our human soul becomes bound to the past through being bound to material things.

Exhaustion in our Lives

This brings us to an important fact of our lives: we are exhausted. These behaviors, these wounds, use up our life forces. When we live in society today, our energy diminishes. This dwindling is one problem in our practical work as teachers. We don't have the forces, the enthusiastic joy, for our children anymore, and we call the children "more difficult."

Before birth, human souls see what is happening now on the earth — the materialism, the cold technological environment around human beings. These souls say "yes" to this and enter this world in order to help the world change. When they meet us, seeing exhausted and burned-out kindergarten teachers and parents, they have great difficulty, but they can't express it. For the children who are coming onto the earth *know* how to save and rescue the world. They have this teaching, coming from the spiritual world. But when we try to make them fit into *our* system, our life and society, we kill their spiritual path.

The question is: Are we flexible enough to change kindergartens and homes in order to meet the needs of children today? The way children are nourished has changed completely. The children are hungry. They are physically, emotionally, and spiritually malnourished. The children need a different, specific and individual approach from us. They need life forces from us.

We are faced with individualities who have difficulty penetrating subjects. In Germany, the Ritalin program for ADHD is increasingly popular. Certain children with organic problems *do* need Ritalin; it is a good transitional coping mechanism. But it is a crime against the soul of a child to administer Ritalin to him to make him fit better into his classroom and into our school system. Children can't develop other than they do in our medicated, media-filled, culture. They are very often hyperactive because of the culture; then we give them a biochemical bomb (Ritalin) so that they can concentrate in front of the computer.

The real remedy for many of these children would be the warm attention of adults and stimuli for the lower senses. But we can only create this in our kindergartens when we have life forces, and instead we are suffering from a sort of everlasting soul influenza. When we have the flu physically, we separate ourselves, put ourselves to bed, and pull the blankets up. We don't want to see anybody. We need quiet, silence, and rest, for our life forces are needed to overcome this illness.

We are suffering from a perpetual flu of the soul: "Not one more problem. I can't cope with these parents. Unless they are real Waldorf parents, I can't deal with them." When I am out of life forces I cannot encounter the spiritual being of the individual child. To encounter the other human being I have to go out of myself, toward the other. This is a kind of sacrifice.

Nature of the I

Rudolf Steiner, in *The Apocalypse of St. John*, says that the human *I* has two aspects. One is bound to the past, to the remembrance of security and fixed perceptions. This was good in former times. The other aspect, the social aspect of the *I*, is able to live with others and can connect with the spiritual qualities of a community. In *Against the Pollution of the I*, Jacques Lusseyran suggests that the malady of non-communication is a progressive poison. By giving the lower ego free rein, the *I* is put to death. The *I* is fragile.

It won't be easy to come to the *I*. It will be a fight, a battle inside us. But if we don't fight this battle, other forces will enter us. Those who do fight and who come to this insight into the aspects of the *I* will come to powerlessness, will feel: "I don't know anymore. I don't know anything. I don't *want* to know anything." This desperation is itself the eye of the needle. This is a moment when we have to say "yes." To say "yes" to this zero-point is a step on the path of initiation. It is a step I cannot take on my own, but a spiritual being must help me, for I can no longer do anything; there is nothing coming from the world anymore. Development always means going through this point of suffering and powerlessness.

It seems that human beings can manage anything these days — we can manipulate genes and break the stock exchange. The power of intelligence is incredible today. But the meeting of materialistic and spiritual power always involves passage through the eye of the needle. The more I am connected to the material world, the more there is a need to connect with the spiritual world in order to stay with the course of human development.

When I am stuck and angry with a person, when tears come, there is a dissolution of things. Tears are a beautiful picture of the softening of the material world. The best sign of a new solution is tears! So let us cry! Something starts to move when I cry. The moment I begin to cry is already one part of the solution.

The moment I go through the eye of the needle, I will perceive the world differently, as processes. I will be more wise and more mild. These are the qualities of old people. This soft way of looking at the way things are going on in the world is one of the beautiful results of going through the eye of the needle. You have no need to judge a situation anymore. You can relax. Ongoing judging is a sign of stress. You fix the world and use your life forces.

There are three qualities we have to develop inside us to go through the eye of the needle, to go through and not die or give up. To go through with confidence, without desperation, we need the qualities of *wonder*, *compassion*, and *conscience*.

Strengthening the Life Forces

How can we not only preserve the life forces in our four sheaths, but care for and develop them? This is an important question that calls for research.

First of all, *love* and *well-intended interest* strengthen the life forces. Just loving the human beings around us, building up interest in everything and everybody just as they are, this brings life forces to the ego. It is important for our children to meet with and be stimulated by many things and diverse situations. This makes the *I* strong. The quality of loving the world as it is can then arise in puberty.

Love for the world is enhanced by well-intended interest in the spiritual being of the other. This is interest not in his mistakes but in those qualities that are perhaps not fully developed. Have you been in situations in which you are around certain people and you were better than you usually are? These people believed in you; they wanted to empower you. Usually we fix others in their mistakes, and this decreases life forces. But well-intended interest in the other makes everything better.

Secondly, we must seek to *understand life processes*, to know more clearly the relationship between human beings and world phenomena. For example, if we do not look deeply into the

relationship between the development of the computer and the unfolding of the Michaelic stream, and we just say the computer is bad, we miss the connection, and our life forces decrease.

When we see how life processes work in the world, we may be better able to understand the different beings of boys and girls. Why is aggression increasing among boys while this is less the case in girls? We know that men and boys suffer most today. Why? Masculine power is used to manage and control. But you can't *manage* the spiritual world; you can't *control* it with power. The masculine side suffers from this. But understanding this gives us life forces.

Further, we need to cultivate the quality of *joy*. What a wonderful thing, that we are allowed to be here on earth! Sadly, we are often too shy to show it outwardly. Children look at the adults around them and see that we are stressed, overwhelmed, and joyless. But what they need is ecstasy! Joy is what we must give to our children. We must show them that we are grateful to be here, that this is a beautiful time to be here, because we are free to change so much on earth. When we are separated and uprooted from life itself, living in virtual reality, this leads youngsters to drugs, for they crave connection. Joy in being here makes us healthy and builds a connection to the physical body.

Love of every being and well-intended interest foster the quality of *wonder*. Well-intended interest and an understanding of life processes cultivate the quality of *compassion*. The understanding of life and the joy of being here on Earth stimulate the quality of *conscience*.

The moral, conscious attitude that the qualities of wonder, compassion, and conscience bring about is what the world needs at this time.

Saturday Morning

“How can we understand the role of evil in our times in the development of the child and of humanity?”

There was a young man who was having difficulties with drugs in high school. While the school's college of teachers was meeting behind closed doors to discuss his case, the boy himself came into the room, shocking many. He said that whatever decision they made concerning his fate, he simply wanted to say, “You need me!” About half of the college, the ones who had him in class, concluded that this was the final insolence, while the other half thought that he might be speaking the truth. Ultimately he was given a leave of absence and then came back, and many issues that had been splitting the students, faculty, and parent body were resolved, for working out how best to engage this boy's situation had the effect of building bridges among people.

This boy presented himself as an individuality in the process of becoming. He knew he was not problem-free, but he felt that because the adults around him were often overwhelmed and exhausted with their own lives, they didn't take the time or have the energy to cope with him. He called himself a “homeless individuality” who hadn't been able to find real friends. He also expressed frustration with the rapid pace and time pressures of life. He had a sense of uprootedness and disconnectedness. Finally, he accused the adults of not showing their joy in life.

This boy's experiences point to the many ways in which we have put our children's development at risk. We often do not give our children the chance to have a physical body that is penetrated and integrated with the etheric, or life body, and the astral body of wishes and desires. The physical body itself is under-developed due to poor nutrition, too many vaccinations, and insufficient development of the lower senses of movement, balance, touch, and life (or well-

being). The modern result of this lack of proper unfolding and development in the lower senses is called ADD or ADHD.

Processes of development require time, and modern culture robs children of this time by demanding them to be little adults by age seven or eight or younger. We ask them to imitate adults far too early and do not allow them to be children any more. As a result, we human beings feel exhausted, we feel lonely in community, and we feel dissociated from the stream of time. Rather, we feel driven or overwhelmed. We are unable to have a real encounter, because true meeting requires time and physical well-being. There are also fewer contexts for social encounter than there used to be. The impetus to meet must come from us. Freedom is the positive side of this new social reality, but the shadow side is loneliness. In the past we found our security socially in large groups. But the social group grows smaller and smaller. For example, now there are fewer extended family living situations and many more single parent households.

Ultimately the ego faces its individual identity crisis. Going through the eye of the needle is the uncomfortable but spiritually necessary choice each individuality faces. But it remains a choice, and some individualities retreat from that juncture. They do not want to go through but turn back and align their egos with old associations of blood relationships, ethnicities, or nationalities. Alternatively they may numb themselves with TV, alcohol, drugs, addiction to criticism, and so forth. There are many ways to avoid going through. Each individual's decision to go through this narrow eye and reach the spirit self — or not — has consequences. It will make a difference to what can come in the future. And it is a decision that rests entirely in the inner realm of freedom belonging to each person.

Transforming Evil in Our Time

The tasks of realizing the consciousness soul and creating new forms of Michael-inspired, courageous, and creative community are upon us. This means that we must hold the balance and be able to live and cope in a world of contradictions. In Greek times one side was good and the other evil, and one could discard the evil. Our task now is to see how the evil can serve the good. Both are necessary to our development. The evil might even be our own sleepy inertia, which keeps us from doing something out of our own inner activity. Even so, what hinders us now from going through the eye of the needle and engaging our *I*, may prove to be a valuable detour containing necessary lessons. So a failure is no cause for judgment, nor is it the end of the story.

In the fifth lecture in *From Symptoms to Reality*, Rudolf Steiner encourages us to perceive events of birth and death externally and to gain an understanding of repeated lives on earth. He mentions that in the fifth cultural epoch evil is destined to develop in man's inner being, and he suggests that if we want to inquire into evil in the human being we must look not only to society, but to tendencies inside the human being. We have to come to an important time of observing and acknowledging the role of evil in our time. How are evil tendencies active in mankind? We receive insight and answers to such questions when we try to gain a real understanding of the human being, since in this epoch evil tendencies are present in us all. Whether these tendencies lead to evil actions depends on other circumstances.

Picture a train traveling on the tracks. One might say that the function of a railway engine is to wear down the rails, for that is in fact what happens. However, the truth of it is that the wear is only a side effect, not the true intention. In the same way evil in our time does not exist for its own sake, but rather it awakens in mankind the life of the spirit by calling upon us to develop the consciousness soul.

Self-recognition is usually a painful process, born not out of harmonious and comfortable situations in life, but rather out of the contradictory and complex situations we face. This may give us an appreciation for the complicated social problems in our time even though we prefer harmony, joy, and happiness. Many Waldorf schools would like to have a director and save the time and energy used by arriving at decisions by consensus. But we have to go through social conflicts in order to be more free. Is it a wonder that our youngsters have trouble living with contradictions and balancing contradictory roles? They numb themselves with drugs, still imitating adults who numb themselves differently. If we blame our youngsters for not being able to cope with the fast pace of life and the difficult role of evil, we must realize that we are just as incapable.

To get at the roots of the phenomenon, we have to start with self-recognition. “Man recognize Yourself” is the task of the fifth post-Atlantean cultural epoch. Ita Wegman, in her *Out of the Working of Michael*, gave beautiful pictures of our Time Spirit, the Archangel Michael. Usually in these pictures a battle is represented in which a lower aspect is conquered by a higher one. The lower aspect involves a dragon, but there is also a being which voluntarily sacrifices itself and voluntarily accompanies the path of evil without being evil itself. That being is the preparer of the path, the angel whom Christ sent before Him and who is later called Elijah. The archangel who overshadows this angel is Michael.

The Archangel Michael holds sway wherever personalities are striving to develop. If we make judgments, saying that these developing personalities are evil, they become fixed in those perceptions and do become evil. What we need is the empathy to accompany these beings, to help them come through. An appropriate prayer might be: “Stop me from thinking in a fixed way about people who are caught up in criminal behavior, drug use, and so on. Help me to give them space.” If I try to make the world good by stopping what I perceive as evil, then I stop development. And that is evil.

Victor Frankl was an Austrian therapist who died three years ago. In his work with prisoners he recognized his task as that of helping them to overcome the deeds they had done and the associated guilt while not judging them. His message was that they were human beings with a higher self. One prisoner observed that Frankl’s work was successful because “he looked at us as if our self-development was worthwhile.”

So the main intention of evil is to awaken mankind for the spiritual self. The apparent negativity is like the worn railway tracks, a side effect or symptom. To recognize evil is to face it, not to exclude evil from the developmental path. At the critical moment we must ask ourselves, “Am I a true companion to those young people who are entering a path of evil?” If we accompany them to that abyss, they may make it.

A further aspect of being non-judgmental was illumined by another boy who was sent to my office by the school authorities for drug issues. The boy entered my office clearly uncomfortable, not free, and started by saying he wasn’t sure exactly why he was there. I simply reflected his statements back to him until he started to come forth with the situation. The boy said, “The teachers say that I have problems with my will because I use hashish. I was told you could make it go away.” I responded, “I’m not willing to be your next drug.” I continued to reflect his statements back to him for most of the hour, and I finally said, “I can’t stop your hash consumption for you.” Six weeks later he called to tell me he had quit, although I had never told him to quit. He himself had decided to do it. Young people need space. It is okay to have a moral point of view, but it is not for judgment. When we judge people, we make them passive.

Evil is a force which can destroy mankind or develop mankind, and the outcome depends on the quality of the social encounter. In *From Symptom to Reality*, Rudolf Steiner talks about facing evil in a positive way. He says there have to be new qualities of encounter on a higher level.

First, we have to learn to perceive the spiritual archetype of a person through his picture nature. (In the future we will become somewhat transparent.) Second, we need to listen to his speech, his words, the language; then the knowledge of the ego will be added. Not in the word itself but in the space behind it will we see the spiritual connection. Third, man will experience inwardly the emotional reaction of others in his own respiration. In our respiration we will feel what kind of person we are dealing with. Fourth, in the way we are working together we have to learn to digest each other's deeds. This is what we must learn in the next millennium. By facing evil in this way, it will not gain the upper hand.

Sunday Morning

“How can we support healthy child development in the challenging sensory environment of our times?”

A medical study of six-year-olds entering schools in Germany shows the tendencies of our times. Of those children entering school: 34% have allergies, 20% come to school without breakfast, 30% have “backbone” (spinal, structural) problems, 60% have sleeping disorders, 37% are overweight (wrongly nourished), 61% live in a smoking addicted environment, and 15% live in abusive surroundings.

Facing this, we can no longer say: “Childhood isn't that bad,” or “These are neglected groups that do not belong to the mainstream of society.” This is part of life. It hurts to experience these children who suffer.

Many of the youngsters in our schools, perhaps with some of these symptoms, fear becoming adults. They don't feel sheltered in this world, or secure in their physical body. In Germany, forty-five children *a day* try to commit suicide. Victor Frankl found that in the U.S. half a million young people a year are trying to kill themselves just before college. These children look back to a childhood in which they tried to withdraw (through anorexia, for example), or isolate themselves (through technological, computerized pursuits), so that they would not need to communicate with the world anymore.

Children and adolescents are suffering from depression and from its counterpart, aggression. Against this background, young people long more than ever to have time and to be left in peace by adults and teachers. They long for sanctuaries.

How can we support healthy child development in the challenging sensory environment of our time? This is not easy. There is no simple recipe. First, let us ask: *What is a healthy childhood?* What qualities stand behind a healthy childhood?

When a child is first born, there is a certain holy atmosphere around the child. The spiritual realm around the child touches us deeply. We can try to find words to describe the vestiges of this quality that can remain in kindergarten.

Trust: What is so touching is that no matter what surroundings a child is born into, all children have trust. No matter what kind of house they are born into, they want to adore somebody. But do they find enough people worthy of adoration?

Play: Children are absolutely invested in everything they do. They cannot split themselves and do two things at once — only adults can do this. Children lose themselves in play and forget time and space. They create a world of fantasy in which anything can become anything. This is the danger inherent in fixed toys. They do not allow the child's fantasy to transform them into anything else.

No Masks: Children are what they are; they live without masks. And, if they take on a role, they tell us beforehand. ("I am a princess now.") They are completely identified with themselves.

Forgiveness: An essential quality of childhood is that children can forgive anything, even abuse. This is a very deep, unconscious quality of the child.

We are living in a society of unforgiveness, mistrust, disrespect, and multi-tasking. Childhood forces seem to be the opposite of adult society. The task of the Waldorf teacher is to make sure children have and keep these qualities, to cultivate an inner knowledge of these qualities and act so as not to jeopardize them.

The Environment of Children Today

What characterizes the environment of children today? *Products:* In society there is the general attitude of: "If you've got it, flaunt it." The idea is that the possession of products make one's identity. The consciousness of brands is strong even in kindergarten.

Media: We suffer greatly from passivity caused by media and electronic toys. Sense passivity is killing the life processes that want to be developed. Passivity through media is a very serious pathology in our time.

Loss of Power: We are losing our power to grapple with these realities. We give up the fight. Over the TV issue, for example, we should not ask parents to make contracts such as: "Your child is allowed to enter this Waldorf School if you promise that your child won't watch TV until the age of ten." Perhaps some parents can accomplish this, but many cannot. But they sign up, and a schizophrenic pattern of untruth is created.

Loss of Speech and Language: We are losing our capacity for speech and language. Research shows that children's language skills do not improve beyond a third grade level if they watch TV for three hours a day from the age of four. Our ability to communicate with others through words is being stunted. Barry Sanders, author of *A is for Ox: The Collapse of Literacy and the Rise of Violence in an Electronic Age*, writes: "Pistols are the writing instruments of the illiterates." When children are not able to communicate their emotions with words, then feelings and aggressiveness are thrust to a lower level.

Schools Support Economy: Schools are starting to be places for the selection of a professional career, institutions that support economic growth and professional career choices. They are ceasing to be places for the building up of human capacities and social skills.

Short Lessons: Building up a new process of will in the rhythm of forty-five-minute lessons does not work. This time limit stops the lesson before the process enters the child's will. The time must be lengthened. There must be a minimum of one hour per lesson — in addition to the two-and-a-half hour main lesson block in the morning.

Utilitarian environment: School environments are more and more functional, devoid of fantasy. Some of the German government kindergarten buildings are equipped with computers. Four- and five-year-old children enter these rooms every morning.

In summary, *we are living in a crisis!* To give up qualities of childhood is to give up on the future. The future lies in the forces of childhood. We adults are also yearning to get back these forces on a conscious level: to be able to forgive, to be social, to adore something beyond ourselves, to dedicate ourselves to a goal or task. We yearn for this. If we don't give our children the possibility of having these childhood qualities, then in their children these qualities will never arise.

Crisis is positive. The word comes from the Greek and means "decision." Mankind is at the point of decision. We have to decide about our society. Each of us must be a fighter for the qualities of childhood. Therefore, we have inaugurated the Alliance for Childhood.

Another issue we have to struggle with, even in the kindergarten, is *aggression* and *violence*. What is the deeper source of aggressiveness and violence, of senseless, unanticipated, violence? When do we ourselves become aggressive?

At one time in my life I suffered with shoulder and neck trauma and was stressed by pain. The anthroposophical doctor advised me to have an MRI to find the reason for the problem. I had no knowledge of MRI, but I went to the MRI room, disrobed, and got on the table. The assistant left the room and spoke over the loudspeaker: "We are driving now." I disappeared into an apparently unending tunnel. As I lay in the tunnel, a voice said: "If you need to breathe, breathe shallowly." Then there was a huge clanking noise. Depressed, I thought that the tunnel was broken, so I pushed the alarm button and got out. The assistant came with a syringe of Valium, but I said: "I don't need Valium. I need to understand how this works." I was taken around, shown how the mechanism worked, and was then able to survive inside the tunnel for half an hour without the sedation.

This must be the inner feeling of our children, whose real needs for development are not considered in an appropriate way. They must feel stuck, in a tunnel-like physical body which is not flexible enough. Children are not being well-served by their environment, and this is a source of aggressiveness. If we are hungry or have had too little sleep, we start to be aggressive. When sixty percent of children have sleeping disorders, it is healthy to become aggressive! It is a shout for help: There is something wrong being done with me! We must become researchers into the problem, not with blame, but with a loving interest in the child. But in order to engage in this research, we need to have time for our children, time which is so often not given to them.

There is a wonderful book in German, which tells the true story of an eleven-year-old Norwegian boy named Morton, who was sick with terminal cancer. He read a column for children somewhere and wrote a letter in response. His letter caused an avalanche of letters from children all over Norway. The journalist who was receiving all these letters, a seventy-year-old man, went to help Morton work with the letters, to try to answer them. These two became friends. Then Morton said: "We will write a book, and I will say which letters will appear in it." Toward the end, Morton didn't want to hear any letters from adults, only from children under ten.

Morton wrote, in a letter to his parents: "If I had written before my illness, I would have said I have had a bad life. Mama and Papa were so busy. I am an only child. I got lots of presents, which my friends didn't, but it would have been better to be home with my parents, with time. When my parents realized I was sick, suddenly they had time. They say often, now, how much

they love me. They never said this before — and I wouldn't have believed it. Dear Mother, now you are pregnant again. Do me a favor. Don't make the same mistake again.”

The main task of education in our time is to bring the deepest activity into childhood. What does this mean? We must give children the chance to develop their lower senses fully, especially the sense of touch. We must give children space for physical movement. If there is not space at home or on the street, then parents have to take their children outside into nature at least three or four times a week.

Why does Huckleberry Finn never get addicted? (There is a book by this title in Europe.) Huckleberry Finn has a drunken father, no mother, is neglected, has no Waldorf kindergarten, and no music lessons. But he does have nature. He lives almost entirely in nature. He swings on the trees, jumps in the water. He does everything with his lower senses that he can do. He gets muddy and dirty. There is no father or mother taking him away from these activities because they could be too dangerous. And later in life, he is able to cope with situations that are not joyful, because he had so much joy before!

Let us give our children an active time of joy. Then they can face conflict. To let the sense of touch be developed helps the child build trust in the higher world, trust in other ego-beings. Whenever children have only *one* material (such as all plastic toys) there is no differentiation. The sense of touch becomes limited. You have a different feeling touching nylon or silk. Give children many sense experiences. Say “yes” to the physical body! This gives the children a foundation for all that comes next.
