

“Education as if People and Planet Matter“

*I grew up in trees; one particular tree is one of my mothers.
She taught me about combinational existence.*

As a child I found humans very difficult to understand. Our cruelty, our parasitic behavior was impossible for me to comprehend and the dualism of the human world made no sense.

I grew up in the ocean and I had the privilege of growing up with animals and living through their births and deaths.

Another privilege of mine is that my human mother is one of the most gentle warriors in the fight for the rights of all creatures and the planet, and for the right to be someone who doesn't fit into social protocol.

The degenerative tendency of human behavior became a concern of mine from a very early age. By the time I hit puberty there was no doubt that my life would be dedicated to safeguarding environments where human development is allowed, encouraged and facilitated.

It never has felt like a choice, it is the reason I exist.

It has been crystal clear to me since I was a child that unless we utterly re-assess and reform the way we treat babies, children and teenagers very little change making will have pattern and norm altering power.

Now I am the single parent of two children who, just like all other children I have had the honor to be with, tirelessly remind me of a raw, uncompromising respect for human nature.

In my work as a movement teacher and therapist with all ages I see the results of Educational systems that limit human potential, suppress natural inclinations and talents, and prioritise conformity and competition. I see the severe restrictive effect that these systems have on our natural tendency to coexist and to remain aware of the interdependencies that rule our body and our world. In my mission to maintain neuroplasticity and therefore full range of choices in People I strive to reinforce the joy and freedom of self determination with trust in our instincts and the wisdom of the body. Like when we were kids...

When People and Planet matter, existence IS coexistence and coexistence is what Education is about. Learning to coexist is the curriculum and mentors are not only humans and not only adults.

Learning happens in trees and in the ocean.

Learning is listening and understanding the world, observing the darting lizards, the kitten dedicated to play, the young dog caring for the old one who can now hardly walk. Smelling the linden blossom, honeysuckle, orange and lemon flowers. Hearing the blackbird's melody, the owls' conversations at night, the hawk's warning cries. Picking and biting into juicy fruit straight off the tree. Watching for shooting stars, following the phases of the moon, rejoicing in the sun and the rain.

If we don't know these things, we cannot find our place within our world and know our relation to the universe: and we can never love and protect our planet.

When People and Planet matter, Education is the driving force to safeguard environments in which the limitlessness and brilliance of human potential can flourish.

The human body is a community of 50 trillion cells based on harmonious coexistence. When Education happens in nature and the body is fully involved then we can evolve beyond what we are accustomed to accept as our human limits. With the example, guidance and inspiration of the genius of nature within and around us this evolution becomes simple, effortless and sustainable. Then the logic of human nature and the logic of nature slip and slide back into each other.

When this happens, Education is by default about learning that is embodied, ecological, inclusive, intergenerational, multicultural and multilingual. When this happens learning is by default across all borders planted in the right to choose, to differ, to self-direct and self-determine in life as a whole for all ages.

When People and Planet matter, Education returns learning to the community which brings radical social reform. Global reform becomes more possible allowing deep, sustainable local reform and vice versa. Non-invasive global reform can then facilitate local, culture specific reform in both urban societies and in indigenous rural communities which in their turn enrich global evolution.

The wisdom that can then surface from diverse cultures can naturally replace the debilitating trend of colonialistic attitudes. When we can listen and utilise this ancient diverse wisdom we may have a chance of engaging in Educational reform and the subsequent social reform from a new starting point.

When People and Planet matter, liaison between global inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations dealing and deciding in Education becomes productive and keeping our young out of the proceedings no longer makes sense. Compulsory Education makes less sense than compulsory provision of freedom of choice in Education. When this happens welfare systems will step up to protect the young, resurrecting their founding principles to keep them from harm.

When People and Planet matter, signing the articles on the right to learn and to free choice in learning as stated in the Constitution of each country, in the texts of the UN

and the European Union ceases to be merely symbolic. It becomes a commitment to the future of the planet.

When People and Planet matter, tipping points emerge in human dynamics, priorities radically shift and Education gently deconstructs repressive and/or dominant patterns without conflict and collapse. Collaboration beyond dividing lines returns as a normal, natural, human characteristic and passage towards resilience is created.

When People and Planet matter, Education has no place in patriarchal, capitalistic, colonial, transgenerational trauma systems: its place is in community and in the environment and ecology of each community.

Education must aim to build societies that respect nature and realize that this is the only way to protect humankind and to halt our destruction of the Planet.

As the urgency of saving the Planet becomes increasingly clear as the sole responsibility of us, the People, Education's objectives must be the basis of any future coexistence of all life on Earth.

If there is to be any kind of social change, there must be a different kind of education so that children are not brought up to conform.

Krishnamurti